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THERE IS SORROW on the SEA

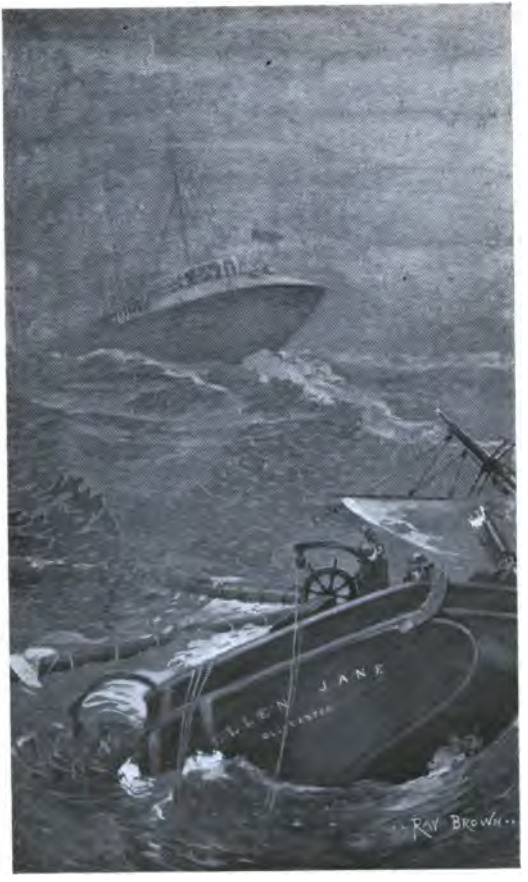
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'THERE IS SORROW ON THE SEA'


ELLEN JANE
RAY BROWN

There is Sorrow on the Sea

By

GILBERT PARKER

and other stories by

S. R. CROCKETT, HAROLD FREDERIC, W. CLARK RUSSELL & "Q"

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'THERE IS SORROW ON THE SEA'

BY

GILBERT PARKER

'THERE IS SORROW ON THE SEA'

I.

YORK FACTORY, HUDSON'S BAY.
23rd September, 1747.

MY DEAR COUSIN FANNY, — It was a year last April Fool's Day, I left you on the sands there at Mablethorpe, no more than a stone's throw from the Book-in-Hand, swearing that you should never see or hear from me again. You remember how we saw the coastguards flash their lights here and there, as they searched the sands for me? how one came bundling down the bank, calling, 'Who goes there?' and when I said, 'A friend,' he stumbled, and his light fell to the sands and went out, and in the darkness you and I stole away: you to your home, with a whispering, 'God-bless-

you, Cousin Dick,' over your shoulder, and I with a bit of a laugh that, maybe, cut you to the heart, and that split in a sob in my own throat, — though you did n't hear that.

'T was a bad night's work that, Cousin Fanny, and maybe I wish it undone; and maybe I don't; but a devil gets into the heart of a man when he has to fly from the lass he loved, while the friends of his youth go hunting him with muskets, and he has to steal out of the back-door of his own country and shelter himself, like a cold sparrow, up in the eaves of the world.

Ay, lass, that 's how I left the fens of Lincolnshire a year last April Fool's Day. There was n't a dyke from Lincoln town to Mablethorpe that I had n't crossed with a running jump; and there was n't a break in the shore, or a sink-hole in the sand, or a clump of rushes, or a samphire bed, from Skegness to Theddlethorpe, that I did n't know like every line of your face. And when I was a slip of a lad — ay, and later, too,

— how you and I used to snuggle into little nooks of the sand-hills, maybe just beneath the coastguard's hut, and watch the tide come swilling in, — daisies you used to call the breaking surf, Cousin Fanny! And that was like you, always with a fancy about everything you saw. And when the ships, the fishing-smacks with their red sails, and the tall-masted brigs, went by, taking the white foam on their canvas, you used to wish that you might sail away to the lands you 'd heard tell of from old skippers that gathered round my uncle's fire in the Book-in-Hand. Ay, a grand thing I thought it would be, too, to go riding round the world on a well-washed deck, with plenty of food and grog, and maybe, by-and-by, to be first mate, and lord it from fo'castle bunk to stern-rail!

You did not know, did you, who was the coastguardsman that stumbled as he came on us that night? It looked a stupid thing to do that, and let the lantern fall. But, lass, 't was done o' purpose. That was the one man

in all the parish that would ha' risked his neck to let me free. 'T was Lancy Doane, who 's give me as many beatings in his time as I him. We were always getting foul one o' t'other since I was big enough to shy a bit of turf at him across a dyke, and there is n't a spot on 's body that I have n't hit, nor one on mine that he has n't mauled. I 've sat on his head, and he 's had his knee in my stomach till I squealed, and we never could meet without back-talking and rasping 'gainst the grain. The night before he joined the coast-guardsmen, he was down at the Book-in Hand, and 't was little like that I 'd let the good chance pass, — I might never have another; for Gover'ment folk will not easy work a quarrel on their own account. I mind him sittin' there on the settle, his shins against the fire, a long pipe going, and Casey of the 'Lazy Beetle,' and Jobbin the mate of the 'Dodger,' and Little Faddo, who had the fat Dutch wife down by the Ship Inn, and Whiggle the preaching blacksmith. And

you were standin' with your back to the shinin' pewters, and the great jug of ale with the white napkin behind you; the light o' the fire wavin' on your face, and your look lost in the deep hollow o' the chimney. I think of you most as you were that minute, Cousin Fanny, when I come in. I tell you straight and fair, that was the prettiest picture I ever saw; and I 've seen some rare fine things in my travels. 'T was as if the thing had been set by some one just to show you off to your best. Here you were, a slip of a lass, straight as a bulrush, and your head hangin' proud on your shoulders; yet modest too, as you can see off here in the North the top of the golden-rod flower swing on its stem. You were slim as slim, and yet there was n't a corner on you; so soft and full and firm you were, like the breast of a quail; and I mind me how the shine of your cheeks was like the glimmer of an apple after you 've rubbed it with a bit of cloth. Well, there you stood in some sort of smooth, plain,

clingin' gown, a little bit loose and tumblin' at the throat, and your pretty foot with a brown slipper pushed out, just savin' you from bein' prim. That 's why the men liked you, — you did n't carry a sermon in your waist-ribbon, and the Lord's Day in the lift o' your chin; but you had a smile to give when 't was the right time for it, and men never said things with *you* there that they 'd have said before many another maid.

'T was a thing I 've thought on off here, where I 've little to do but think, how a lass like you could put a finger on the lip of such rough tykes as Faddo, Jobbin, and the rest, keepin' their rude words under flap and button. Do you mind how, when I passed you comin' in, I laid my hand on yours as it rested on the dresser? That hand of yours was n't a tiny bit of a thing, and the fingers were n't all taperin' like a simperin' miss from town, worked down in the mill of quality and got from graftin' and graftin', like one of them roses from the flower-house at Mable-

thorpe Hall, — not fit to stand by one o' them that grew strong and sweet with no fancy colour, in the garden o' the Book-in-Hand. Yours was a hand that talked as much as your lips or face, as honest and white; and the palm all pink, and strong as strong could be, and warmin' every thread in a man's body when he touched it. Well, I touched your hand then, and you looked at me and nodded, and went musin' into the fire again, not seemin' to hear our gabble.

But, you remember — don't you? — how Jobbin took to chaffin' of Lancy Doane, and how Faddo's tongue got sharper as the time got on, and many a nasty word was said of coastguards and excisemen, and all that had to do with law and gover'ment. Cuts there were at some of Lancy's wild doings in the past, and now and then they 'd turn to me, saying what they thought would set me girdin' Lancy too. But I had my own quarrel, and I was n't to be baited by such numskulls. And Lancy — that was a thing

I could n't understand — he did no more than shrug his shoulder and call for more ale, and wish them all good health and a hundred a year. I never thought he could ha' been sc patient-like. But there was a kind of little smile, too, on his face, showin' he did some thinkin'; and I guessed he was bidin' his time.

I was n't as sharp as I might ha' been, or I 'd ha' seen what he was waitin' for, with that quiet provokin' smile on his face, and his eyes smoulderin' like. I don't know to this day whether you wanted to leave the room when you did, though 't was about half after ten o'clock, later than I ever saw you there before. But when my uncle came in from Louth, and gave you a touch on the shoulder, and said: 'To bed wi' you, my lass,' you waited for a minute longer, glancin round on all of us, at last lookin' steady at Lancy; and he got up from his chair, and took off his hat to you with a way he had. You did n't stay a second after that, but went

away straight, sayin' good-night to all of us; but Lancy was the only one on his feet.

Just as soon as the door was shut behind you, Lancy turned round to the fire, and pushed the log with his feet in a way a man does when he's thinkin' a bit. And Faddo gave a nasty laugh, and said:—

'Theer's a dainty sitovation. Theer's Mr. Thomas Doane, outlaw and smuggler, and theer's Mr. Lancy Doane, coastguardsman. Now, if them two should 'appen to meet on Lincolnshire coast, Lord, theer's a sitovation for ye,—Lord, theer's a cud to chew! Ere's one gentleman wants to try 'is 'and at 'elpin' Prince Charlie, and when 'is 'elp does n't amount to anythink, what does the King on 'is throne say? He says, "As for Thomas Doane, Esquire, aw 've doone wi' 'im!" And theer's another gentleman, Mr. Lancy Doane, Esquire. He turns pious, and says, "Aw 'm goin' for a coastguardsman!" What does the King on his throne say? 'E says, "Theer's the man for me!"

But aw says, "Aw 've doone, aw 've doone wid Mr. Lancy Doane, Esquire, and be damned to 'im." He! he! Theer 's a fancy sitovation for ye. Mr. Thomas Doane, Esquire, smuggler and outlaw, an' Mr. Lancy Doane, Esquire, coastguardsman. Aw 've doone. Ho! ho! That gits into my crop.'

I tell you these things, Cousin Fanny, because I 'm doubtin' if you ever heard them, or knew exactly how things stood that night. I never was a friend of Lancy Doane, you understand, but it 's only fair that the truth be told about that quarrel, for like as not he would n't speak himself, and your father was moving in and out; and, I take my oath, I would n't believe Faddo and the others if they were to swear on the Bible. Not that they did n't know the truth when they saw it, but they did love just to let their fancy run. I 'm livin' over all the things that happened that night, — livin' them over to-day, when everything 's so quiet about me here, so lonesome. I wanted to go over it all, bit by bit,

and work it out in my head just as you and I used to do the puzzle games we played in the sands. And maybe, when you 're a long way off from things you once lived, you can see them and understand them better. Out here, where it 's so lonely, and yet so good a place to live in, I seem to get the hang o' the world better, and why some things are, and other things are n't; and I thought it would pull at my heart to sit down and write you a long letter, goin' over the whole business again; but it does n't. I suppose I feel as a judge does when he goes over a lot of evidence, and sums it all up for the jury. I don't seem prejudiced one way or another. But I 'm not sure that I 've got all the evidence to make me ken everything; and that 's what made me bitter wild the last time that I saw you. Maybe you had n't anything to tell me, and maybe you had, and maybe, if you ever write to me out here, you 'll tell me if there 's anything I don't know about them days.

Well, I 'll go back now to what happened when Faddo was speakin' at my uncle's bar. Lancy Doane was standin' behind the settle, leanin' his arms on it, and smokin' his pipe quiet. He waited patient till Faddo had done, then he comes round the settle, puts his pipe up in the rack between the rafters, and steps in front of Faddo. If ever the devil was in a man's face, it looked out of Lancy Doane's that minute. Faddo had touched him on the raw when he fetched out that about Tom Doane. All of a sudden Lancy swings, and looks at the clock.

'It 's half-past ten, Jim Faddo,' he said, 'and aw 've got an hour an' a half to deal wi' you as a Lincolnshire lad. At twelve o'clock aw 'm the Gover'ment's, but till then aw 'm Lancy Doane, free to strike or free to let alone; to swallow dirt or throw it; to take a lie or give it. And now list to me; aw 'm not goin' to eat dirt, and aw 'm goin' to give you the lie, and aw 'm goin' to break your neck, if I swing for it to-morrow, Jim Faddo.

And here 's another thing aw 'll tell you. When the clock strikes twelve, on the best horse in the country aw 'll ride to Theddlethorpe, straight for the well that 's dug you know where, to find your smuggled stuff, and to run the irons round your wrists. Aw 'm dealin' fair wi' you that never dealt fair by no man. You never had an open hand nor soft heart; and because you 've made money, not out o' smugglin' alone, but out o' poor devils of smugglers that did n't know rightly to be rogues, you think to fling your dirt where you choose. But aw 'll have ye to-night as a man, and aw 'll have ye to-night as a King's officer, or aw 'll go damned to hell.'

Then he steps back a bit very shiny in the face, and his eyes like torchlights, but cool and steady. 'Come on now,' he says, 'Jim Faddo, away from the Book-in-Hand, and down to the beach under the sand-hills, and we 'll see man for man — though, come to think of it, y' are no man,' he said — 'if ye 'll

have the right to say when aw'm a King's officer that you could fling foul words in the face of Lancy Doane. And a word more,' he says; 'aw would n't trust ye if an Angel o' Heaven swore for ye. Take the knife from the belt behind your back there, and throw it on the table, for you would n't bide by no fair rules o' fightin'. Throw the knife on the table,' he says, comin' a step forward.

Faddo got on to his feet. He was bigger built than Lancy, and a bit taller, and we all knew he was devilish strong in his arms. There was a look in his face I could n't understand. One minute I thought it was fear, and another I thought it was daze; and maybe it was both. But all on a sudden something horrible cunnin' come into it, and ugly too.

'Go to the well, then, since ye 've found out *all* about it,' he says, 'but aw 've an hour and a half start o' ye, Lancy Doane.'

'Ye 've less than that,' says Lancy back to him, 'if ye go with me to the sands first.'

At that my uncle stepped in to say a word for peace-makin', but Lancy would have none of it. 'Take the knife and throw it on the table,' he said to Faddo once more, and Faddo took it out and threw it down.

'Come on, then,' Faddo says, with a sneerin' laugh; 'we 'll see by daybreak who has the best o' this night's work,' and he steps towards the door.

'Wait a minute,' says Lancy, gettin' in front of him. 'Now take the knife from your boot. Take it,' he says again, 'or aw will. That 's like a man, to go to a fist-fight wi' knives. Take it,' he said; 'aw 'll gi' ye till aw count four, and if ye doan't take it, aw 'll take it meself. One!' he says steady and soft. 'Two!' Faddo never moved. 'Three!' The silence made me sick, and the clock ticked like hammers. 'Four!' he said, and then he sprang for the boot, but Faddo's hand went down like lightnin', too. I could n't tell exactly how they clinched, but once or twice I saw the light flash on the

steel. Then they came down together, Faddo under, and when I looked again Faddo was lying eyes starin' wide, and mouth all white with fear, for Lancy was holding the knife-point at his throat. 'Stir an inch,' says Lancy, 'and aw'll pin ye to the lid o' hell.'

And three minutes by the clock he knelt there on Faddo's chest, the knife-point touching the bone in 's throat. Not one of us stirred, but just stood lookin', and my own heart beat so hard it hurt me, and my uncle steadyin' himself against the dresser. At last Lancy threw the knife away into the fire.

'Coward!' he said. 'A man would ha' taken the knife. Did you think aw was goin' to gie my neck to the noose just to put your knife to proper use? But don't stir till aw gie you the word, or aw'll choke the breath o' life out o' ye.'

At that Faddo sprung to clinch Lancy's arms. but Lancy's fingers caught him in the throat, and I thought surely Faddo was gone,

for his tongue stood out a finger-length, and he was black in the face.

'For God's sake, Lancy,' said my uncle, steppin' forward, 'let him go.'

At that Lancy said, 'He 's right enough. It 's not the first time aw 've choked a coward. Throw cold water on him and gi' 'im brandy.'

Sure enough, he was n't dead. Lancy stood there watchin' us while we fetched Faddo back, and I tell you, that was a narrow squeak for him. When he got his senses again, and was sittin' there lookin' as if he 'd been hung and brought back to life, Lancy says to him: 'There, Jim Faddo, aw 've done wi' you as a man, and at twelve o'clock aw 'll begin wi' ye as King's officer.' And at that, with a good-night to my uncle and all of us, he turns on his heels and leaves the Book-in-Hand.

I tell you, Cousin Fanny, though I 'd been ripe for quarrel wi' Lancy Doane myself that night, I could ha' took his hand like a brother,

for I never saw a man deal fairer wi a scoundrel than he did wi' Jim Faddo. You see it was n't what Faddo said about himself that made Lancy wild, but that about his brother Tom; and a man does n't like his brother spoken ill of by dirt like Faddo, be it true or false. And of Lancy's brother I 'm goin' to write further on in this letter, for I doubt that you know all I know about him, and the rest of what happened that night and afterwards.

. . . . . .

DEAR COUSIN FANNY, — I canna write all I set out to, for word come to me, just as I wrote the last sentence above, that the ship was to leave port three days sooner than was fixed for when I began. I have been rare and busy since then, and I have no time to write more. And so 't will be another year before you get a word from me; but I hope that when this letter comes you 'll write one back to me by the ship that sails next summer from London. The summer 's short and the

winter 's long here, Cousin Fanny, and there 's more snow than grass; and there 's more flowers in a week in Mablethorpe than in a whole year here. But, lass, the sun shines always, and my heart keeps warm in thinkin' of you, and I ask you to forgive me for any harsh word I ever spoke, not forgettin' that last night when I left you on the sands, and stole away like a thief across the sea. I 'm going to tell you the whole truth in my next letter, but I 'd like you to forgive me before you know it all, for 't is a right lonely and distant land, this, and who can tell what may come to pass in twice a twelvemonth! Maybe a prayer on lips like mine does n't seem in place, for I 've not lived as parson says man ought to live, but I think the Lord will have no worse thought o' me when I say, God bless thee, lass, and keep thee safe as any flower in His garden that He watereth with His own hand. Write to me, lass: I love thee still, I do love thee.

DICK ORRY.

II

THE BOOK-IN-HAND INN,
MABLETHORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE.
May-Day, 1749.

DEAR COUSIN DICK, — I think I have not been so glad in many years as when I got your letter last Guy Fawkes Day. I was coming from the church where the parson preached on plots and treasons, and obedience to the King, when I saw the old postman coming down the road. I made quickly to him, I know not why, for I had not thought to hear from you, and before I reached him he held up his hand, showing me the stout packet which brought me news of you. I hurried with it to the inn, and went straight to my room and sat down by the window, where I used to watch for your coming with the fishing fleet, down the sea from the Dogger Bank. I was only a girl, a young girl, then, and the Dogger Bank was, to my

mind, as far off as that place you call York Factory, in Hudson's Bay, is to me now. And yet I did not know how very far it was until our schoolmaster showed me on a globe how few days' sail it is to the Dogger Bank, and how many to York Factory.

But I will tell you of my reading of your letter, and of what I thought. But first I must go back a little. When you went away that wild, dark night, with bitter words on your lips to me, Cousin Dick, I thought I should never feel the same again. You did not know it, but I was bearing the misery of your trouble and of another's also, and of my own as well; and so I said over and over again: Oh, why will men be hard on women? Why do they look for them to be iron like themselves, bearing double burdens as most women do? But afterwards, I settled to a quietness which I would not have you think was happiness, for I have given up thought of that. Nor would I have you think me

bearing trouble sweetly, for sometimes I was most hard and stubborn. But I lived on in a sort of stillness till that morning when, sitting by my window, I read all you had written to me. And first of all, I must tell you how my heart was touched at your words about our childhood together. I had not thought it lay so deep in your mind, Cousin Dick. It always stays in mine; but then, women have more memories than men. The story of that night I knew; but never fully as you have told it to me in your letter. Of what happened after Lancy Doane left the inn, of which you have not written, but promised the writing in your next letter, I think I know as well as yourself. Nay, more, Cousin Dick. There are some matters concerning what followed that night and after, which I know, and you do not know. But you have guessed there was something which I did not tell you, and so there was. And I will tell you of them now. But I will take up the thread of

the story where you dropped it, and reel it out.

You left the inn soon after Lancy Doane, and James Faddo went then, too, riding hard for Theddlethorpe, for he knew that in less than an hour the coastguards would be rifling the hiding-places of his smuggled stuff. You did not take a horse, but, getting a musket, you walked the sands hard to Theddlethorpe.

I know it all, though you did not tell me, Cousin Dick. You had no purpose in going, save to see the end of a wretched quarrel and a smuggler's ill-scheme. You carried a musket for your own safety, not with any purpose. It was a day of weight in your own life, for on one side you had an offer from the Earl Fitzwilliam to serve on his estate; and on the other to take a share in a little fleet of fishing smacks, of which my father was part owner. I think you know to which side I inclined, but that now is neither here nor there; and, though you did not tell me, as you went along the shore you were

more intent on handing back and forth in your mind your own affairs, than of what should happen at Theddlethorpe. And so you did not hurry as you went, and, as things happened, you came to Faddo's house almost at the same moment with Lancy Doane and two other mounted coastguards.

You stood in the shadow while they knocked at Faddo's door. You were so near, you could see the hateful look in his face. You were surprised he did not try to stand the coastguards off. You saw him, at their bidding, take a lantern, and march with them to a shed standing off a little from the house, nearer to the shore. Going a round-about swiftly, you came to the shed first, and posted yourself at the little window on the sea-side. You saw them enter with the lantern, saw them shift a cider press, uncover the floor, and there beneath, in a dry well, were barrels upon barrels of spirits, and crouched among them was a man whom you all knew at once, — Lancy's brother, Tom. That, Cousin

Dick, was Jim Faddo's revenge. Tom Doane had got refuge with him till he should reach his brother, not knowing Lancy was to be coastguard. Faddo, coming back from Mablethorpe, told Tom the coastguards were to raid him that night; and he made him hide in this safe place, as he called it, knowing that Lancy would make for it.

For a minute after Tom was found no man stirred. Tom was quick of brain and wit — would it had always been put to good purposes! — and saw at once Faddo's treachery. Like winking he fired at the traitor, who was almost as quick to return the fire. What made you do it I know not, unless it was you hated treachery; but, sliding in at the open door behind the coastguards, you snatched the lantern from the hands of one, threw it out of the open door, and, thrusting them aside, called for Tom to follow you. He sprang towards you over Faddo's body, even as you threw the lantern,

and catching his arm, you ran with him towards the dyke.

'Ready for a great jump!' you said; 'your life hangs on it.' He was even longer of leg than you. 'Is it a dyke?' he whispered, as the shots from three muskets rang after you. 'A dyke. When I count three, jump,' you answered. I have read somewhere of the great leap that one Don Alvarado, a Spaniard, made in Mexico, but surely never was a greater leap than you two made that night, landing safely on the other side, and making for the sea-shore. None of the coastguardsmen, not even Lancy, could make the leap, for he was sick and trembling, though he had fired upon his own brother. And so they made for the bridge some distance above, just as the faint moon slipped behind a cloud and hid you from their sight.

That is no country to hide in, as you know well, — no caves, or hills, or mazy coombes, — just a wide, flat, reedy place, broken by open wolds. The only refuge for

both now was the sea. 'T was a wild run you two made, side by side, down that shore, keeping close within the gloom of the sand-hills, the coastguards coming after, pressing you closer than they thought at the time, for Tom Doane had been wounded in the leg. But Lancy sent one back for the horses, he and the other coming on; and so, there you were, two and two. 'T was a cruel task for Lancy that night, enough to turn a man's hair grey. But duty was duty, though those two lads were more to each other than most men ever are. You know how it ended. But I want to go all over it just to show you that I understand. You were within a mile of Mablethorpe, when you saw a little fishing smack come riding in, and you made straight for it. Who should be in the smack but Solby, the canting Baptist, who was no friend to you, or my uncle, or any of us. You had no time for bargaining or coaxing, and so, at the musket's mouth, you drove him from the boat, and pushed it out just as Lancy and his

men came riding up. Your sail was up, and you turned the lugger to the wind in as little time as could be, but the coastguardsmen rode after you, calling you to give in. No man will ever know the bitter trouble in Lancy's heart when he gave the order to fire on you, though he did not fire himself. And you, — do I not know, Cousin Dick, what you did? Tom Doane was not the man to fire at the three dark figures riding you down, not knowing which was his brother. But you, you understood that; and you were in, you said to yourself, and you 'd play the game out, come what would. You raised your musket and drew upon a figure. At that moment a coastguard's musket blazed, and you saw the man you had drawn on was Lancy Doane. You lowered your musket, and as you did a ball struck you on the wrist.

Oh, I have thanked God a hundred times, dear Cousin Dick, that you fired no shot that night, but only helped a hunted, miserable man away, for you did get free. Just

in the nick of time your sail caught the wind bravely, and you steered for the open sea. Three days from that, Tom Doane was safe at the Hague, and you were on your way back to Lincolnshire. You came by a fishing boat to Saltfleet Haven, and made your way down the coast towards Mablethorpe. Passing Theddlethorpe, you went up to Faddo's house, and, looking through the window, you saw Faddo, not dead, but being cared for by his wife. Then you came on to Mablethorpe, and standing under my window, at the very moment when I was on my knees praying for the safety of those who travelled by sea, you whistled, like a quail from the garden below, — the old signal. Oh, how my heart stood still a moment, and then leaped, for I knew it was you. I went down to the garden, and there you were. Oh, I *was* glad to see you, Cousin Dick!

You remember how I let you take me in your arms for an instant, and then I

asked if *he* was safe. And when you told me that he was, I burst into tears, and I asked you many questions about him. And you answered them quickly, and then would have taken me in your arms again. But I would not let you, for then I knew — I knew that you loved me, and, oh, a dreadful feeling came into my heart, and I drew back, and could have sunk upon the ground in misery, but that there came a thought of your safety. *He* was safe, but you, — you were here, where reward was set for you. I begged you to come into the house, that I might hide you there, but you would not. You had come for one thing, you said, and only one. An hour or two, and then you must be gone for London. And so you urged me to the beach. I was afraid we might be seen, but you led me away from the cottages near to the little bridge which crosses the dyke. By that way we came to the sands, as we thought unnoted. But no, who should it be to see us but that canting Bap-

tist, Solby! And so the alarm was given. You had come, dear Cousin Dick, to ask me one thing, — if I loved you? and if, should you ever be free to come back, I would be your wife? I did not answer you; I could not answer you; and, when you pressed me, I begged you to have pity on me, and not to speak of it. You thought I was not brave enough to love a man open to the law. As if — as if I knew not that what you did came out of a generous, reckless heart! And on my knees — oh, on my knees — I ought to have thanked you for it. But I knew not what to say; my lips were closed. And just then shots were fired, and we saw the coastguards' lights. Then came Lancy Doane stumbling down the banks, and our parting, — our parting. Your bitter laugh as you left me has rung in my ears ever since.

Do not think we have been idle here in your cause, for I myself went to Earl Fitzwilliam and told him the *whole* story,

and how you had come to help Tom Doane that night. How do I know of it all? Because I have seen a letter from Tom Doane. Well, the Earl promised to lay your case before the King himself, and to speak for you with good eager entreaty. And so, it may be, by next time I write, there will go good news to you, and — will you then come back, dear Cousin Dick?

And I now want to tell you what I know, and what you do not know. Tom Doane had a wife in Mablethorpe. He married her when she was but sixteen, — a child. But she was afraid of her father's anger, and her husband soon after went abroad, became one of Prince Charlie's men, and she's never seen him since. She never really loved him, but she never forgot that she was his wife; and she always dreaded his coming back; as well she might, for you see what happened when he did come. I pitied her, dear Cousin Dick, with all my heart; and when Tom

Doane died on the field of battle in Holland last year, I wept with her and prayed for her. And you would have wept too, man though you are, if you had seen how grateful she was that he died in honourable fighting, and not in a smuggler's cave at Theddlethorpe. She blessed you for that, and she never ceases to work with me for the King's pardon for you.

There is no more to say now, dear Cousin Dick, save that I would have you know I think of you with great desire of heart for your well-being, and I pray God for your safe return some day to the good country which, pardoning you, will cast you out no more.

I am, dear Cousin Dick,
Thy most affectionate Cousin,
FANNY.

P.S. — Dear Dick, my heart bursts for joy. Enclosed here is thy pardon, sent by the good Earl Fitzwilliam last night. I could

serve him on my knees forever. Dick, she that was Tom Doane's wife, she loves thee. Wilt thou not come back to her? In truth, she always loved thee. She was thy cousin; she is thy Fanny. Now thou knowest all.

THE SMUGGLERS OF THE CLONE

BY

S. R. CROCKETT

THE

SMUGGLERS OF THE CLONE.

'*Rise, Robin, rise! The partans are on the sands!*'

The crying at our little window raised me out of a sound sleep, for I had been out seeing the Myreside lasses late the night before, and was far from being wake-rife at two by the clock on a February morning.

It was the first time the summons had come to me, for I was then but young. Hitherto it was my brother John who had answered the raising word of the free-traders spoken at the window. But now John had a farm-steading of his own, thanks to Sir William Maxwell and to my father's siller that had paid for the stock.

So with all speed I did my clothes upon me, with much eagerness and a beating

heart, — as who would not, when, for the first time, he has the privilege of man? As I went out to the barn I could hear my mother (with whom I was ever a favourite) praying for me.

'Save the laddie — save the laddie!' she said over and over.

And I think my father prayed too; but, as I went, he also cried to me counsels.

'Be sure you keep up the grappling chains — dinna let them clatter till ye hae the stuff weel up the hill. The Lord keep ye! Be a guid lad an' ride honestly. Gin ye see Sir William, keep your head doon, an' gae by withoot lookin'. He 's a magistrate, ye ken. But he 'll no' see you, gin ye dinna see him. Leave twa ankers a-piece o' brandy an' rum at our ain dyke back. An' abune a', the Lord be wi' ye, an' bring ye safe back to your sorrowing parents!'

So, with pride, I did the harness graith upon the sonsy back of Brown Bess, — the pad before where I was to sit, — the lingtow

and the hooked chains behind. I had a cutlass, a jockteleg (or smuggler's sheaf-knife), and a pair of brass-mounted pistols ready swung in my leathern belt. Faith, but I wish Bell of the Mains could have seen me then, ready to ride forth with the light-horsemen. She would never scorn me more for a lingle-backed callant, I 'se warrant.

'Haste ye, Robin! Heard ye no' that the partans are on the sands?'

It was Geordie of the Clone who cried to me. He meant the free-traders from the Isle, rolling the barrels ashore.

'I am e'en as ready as ye are yoursel'!' I gave him answer, for I was not going to let him boast himself prideful all, because he had ridden out with them once or twice before. Besides, his horse and accoutrement were not one half so good as mine. For my father was an honest and well-considered man, and in good standing with the laird and the minister, so that he could afford to do things handsomely.

We made haste to ride along the heuchs, which are very high, steep, and rocky at this part of the coast.

And at every loaning-end we heard the clinking of the smugglers chains, and I thought the sound a livening and a merry one.

'A fair guid-e'en and a full tide, young Airyolan!' cried one to me as we came by Killantrae. And I own the name was sweet to my ears. For it was the custom to call men by the names of their farms, and Airyolan was my father's name by rights. But mine for that night, because in my hands was the honour of the house.

Ere we got down to the Clone we could hear, all about in the darkness, athwart and athwart, the clattering of chains, the stir of many horses, and the voices of men.

Black Taggart was in with his lugger, the 'Sea Pyet,' and such a cargo as the Clone men had never run,—so ran the talk on every side. There was not a sleeping

wife nor yet a man left indoors in all the parish of Mochrum, except only the laird and the minister.

By the time that we got down by the shore, there was quite a company of the Men of the Fells, as the shore men called us, — all dour, swack, determined fellows.

'Here come the hill nowt!' said one of the village men, as he caught sight of us. I knew him for a limber-tongued, ill-livered loon from the Port, so I delivered him a blow fair and solid between the eyes, and he dropped without a gurgle. This was to learn him how to speak to innocent harmless strangers.

Then there was a turmoil indeed to speak about, for all the men of the laigh shore crowded round us, and knives were drawn. But I cried, 'Corwald, Mochrum, Chippermore, here to me!' And all the stout lads came about me.

Nevertheless, it looked black for a moment, as the shore men waved their torches

in our faces, and yelled fiercely at us to put us down by fear.

Then a tall young man on a horse rode straight at the crowd which had gathered about the loon I had felled. He had a mask over his face which sometimes slipped awry. But, in spite of the disguise, he seemed perfectly well known to all there.

'What have we here?' he asked, in a voice of questioning that had also the power of command in it.

''T is these Men of the Fells that have stricken down Jock Webster of the Port, Maister William!' said one of the crowd.

Then I knew the laird's son, and did my duty to him, telling him of my provocation, and how I had only given the rascal strength of arm.

'And right well you did,' said Maister William, 'for these dogs would swatter in the good brandy, but never help to carry it to the caves, nor bring the well-graithed horses to the shore-side! Carry the loon

away, and stap him into a heather hole till he come to.'

So that was all the comfort they got for their tale-telling.

'And you, young Airyolan,' said Maister William, 'that are so ready with your strength of arm, — there is even a job that you may do. Muckle Jock, the Preventive man, rides to-night from Isle of Whithorn, where he has been warning the revenue cutter. Do you meet him and keep him from doing himself an injury.'

'And where shall I meet him, Maister William?' I asked of the young laird.

'Oh, somewhere on the heuch-taps,' said he, carelessly; 'and see, swing these on your horse and leave them at Myrtoun on the by-going.'

He called a man with a torch, who came and stood over me, while I laid on Brown Bess a pair of small casks of some fine liqueur, of which more than ordinary care was to be taken, and also a

few packages of soft goods, silks and laces as I deemed.

'Take these to the Loch Yett, and ca' Sandy Fergus to stow them for ye. Syne do your work with the Exciseman as he comes hame. Gar him bide where he is till the sun be at its highest to-morrow. And a double share o' the plunder shall be lyin' in the hole at a back of the dyke at Airyolan when ye ride hame the morn at e'en.'

So I bade him a good-night, and rode my ways over the fields, and across many burns to Myrtoun. As I went I looked back, and there, below me, was a strange sight,—all the little harbour of the Clone lighted up, a hurrying of men down to the shore, the flickering of torches, and the lappering of the sea making a stir of gallant life that set the blood leaping along the veins. It was, indeed, I thought, worth while living to be a free-trader. Far out, I could see the dark spars of the lugger 'Sea Pyet,' and hear the

casks and ankers dumping into the boats alongside.

Then I began to bethink me that I had a more desperate ploy than any of them that were down there, for they were many, and I was but one. Moreover, easily, as young Master William might say, 'Meet Muckle Jock, and keep him till the morn at noon!' the matter was not so easy as supping one's porridge.

Now, I had never seen the Exciseman, but my brother had played at the cudgels with Jock before this. So I knew more of him than to suppose that he would bide for the bidding of one man when in the way of his duty.

But when the young laird went away he slipped me a small, heavy packet.

'Half for you and half for the gauger, gin he hears reason,' he said.

By the weight and the jingle I judged it to be yellow Geordies, the best thing that the wee, wee German lairdie ever sent to Tory

Mochrum. And not too plenty there, either! Though since the Clone folk did so well with the clean-run smuggling from the blessed Isle of Man, it is true that there are more of the Geordies than there used to be.

So I rode round by the back of the White Loch, for Sir William had a habit of daundering, over by the Airlour and Barsalloch, and in my present ride I had no desire to meet with him.

Yet, as fate would have it, I was not to win clear that night. I had not ridden more than half-way round the loch when Brown Bess went floundering into a moss-hole, which are indeed more plenty than paved roads in that quarter. And what with the weight of the pack, and her struggling, we threatened to go down altogether. When I thought of what my father would say, if I went home with my finger in my mouth, and neither Brown Bess nor yet a penny's-worth to be the value of her, I was fairly a-sweat with fear. I cried aloud for help, for there were

cot-houses near by. And, as I had hoped, in a little a man came out of the shadows of the willow bushes.

'What want ye, yochel?' said he, in a mightily lofty tone.

'I 'll "*yochel*" ye, gin I had time. Pu' on that rope,' I said, for my spirit was disturbed by the accident. Also, as I have said, I took ill-talk from no man.

So, with a little laugh, the man laid hold of the rope, and pulled his best, while I took off what of the packages I could reach, ever keeping my own feet moving, to clear the sticky glaur of the bog-hole from them.

'Tak' that hook out, and ease doon the cask, man!' I cried to him, for I was in desperation; 'I 'll gie ye a heartsome gill, even though the stuff be Sir William's!'

And the man laughed again, being, as I judged, well enough pleased. For all that service yet was I not pleased to be called 'yochel.' But, in the meantime, I saw not how, at the moment, I could begin to cuff

and clout one that was helping my horse and stuff out of a bog-hole. Yet I resolved somehow to be even with him, for, though a peaceable man, I never could abide the calling of ill names.

'Whither gang ye?' said he.

'To the Muckle Hoose o' Myrtoun,' said I, 'and gang you wi' me, my man; and gie me a hand doon wi' the stuff, for I hae nae stomach for mair warsling in bog-holes. And wha kens but that auld thrawn Turk, Sir William, may happen on us?'

'Ken ye Sir William Maxwell?' said the man.

'Na,' said I. 'I never so muckle as set e'en on the auld wretch. But I had sax hard days' wark cutting doon bushes, and makin' a road for his daftlike carriage wi' wheels, for him to ride in to Mochrum Kirk'

'Saw ye him never there?' said the man, as I strapped the packages on again.

'Na,' said I, 'my faither is a Cameronian, and gangs to nae Kirk hereaboots.'

'He has gi'en his son a bonny upbringing, then!' quoth the man.

Now this made me mainly angry, for I cannot bide that folk should meddle with my folk. Though as far as I am concerned myself I am a peaceable man.

'Hear ye,' said I, 'I ken na wha ye are that speers so mony questions. Ye may be the de'il himsel', or ye may be the enemy o' Mochrum, the blackavised Commodore frae Glasserton. But, I can warrant ye that ye 'll no mell and claw unyeuked with Robin o' Airyolan. Hear ye that, my man, and keep a civil tongue within your ill-lookin' cheek, gin ye want to gang hame in the morning wi' an uncracked croun!'

The man said no more, and by his gait I judged him to be some serving man. For, as far as the light served me, he was not so well put on as myself. Yet there was a kind of neatness about the creature that showed him to be no outdoor man either.

However, he accompanied me willingly enough till we came to the Muckle House of Myrtoun. For I think that he was feared of his head at my words. And indeed it would not have taken the kittling of a flea to have garred me draw a staff over his crown. For there is nothing that angers a Galloway man more than an ignorant, upsetting town's body, putting in his gab when he desires to live peaceable.

So, when we came to the back entrance, I said to him: 'Hear ye to this. Ye are to make no noise, my mannie, but gie me a lift doon wi' thae barrels cannily. For that dour old tod, the laird, is to ken naething aboot this. Only Miss Peggy and Maister William, they ken. 'Deed, it was young William himsel' that sent me on this errand.'

So with that the mannie gave a kind of laugh, and helped me down with the ankers far better than I could have expected. We rolled them into a shed at the back of the

stables, and covered them up snug with some straw and some old heather thatching.

'Ay, my lad,' says I to him, 'for a' your douce speech and fair words I can see that ye hae been at this job afore!'

'Well, it is true,' he said, 'that I hae rolled a barrel or two in my time.'

Then, in the waft of an eye I knew who he was. I set him down for Muckle Jock, the Excise officer, that had never gone to the Glasserton at all, but had been lurking there in the moss, waiting to deceive honest men. I knew that I needed to be wary with him, for he was, as I had heard, a sturdy carl, and had won the last throw at the Stoneykirk wrestling. But all the men of the Fellside have an excellent opinion of themselves, and I thought I was good for any man of the size of this one.

So said I to him: 'Noo, chiel, ye ken we are no' juist carryin' barrels o' spring water at this time o' nicht to pleasure King George. Hearken ye: we are in danger of

being laid by the heels in the jail of Wigton gin the black lawyer corbies get us. Noo, there's a Preventive man that is crawling and spying ower by on the heights o' Physgill. Ye maun e'en come wi' me an' help to keep him oot o' hairm's way. For it wad not be for his guid that he should gang doon to the port this nicht!'

The man that I took to be the gauger hummed and hawed a while, till I had enough of his talk and unstable ways.

'No back-and-forrit ways wi' Robin,' said I. 'Will ye come and help to catch the King's officer, or will ye not?'

'No' a foot will I go,' says he. 'I have been a King's officer, myself!'

Whereupon I laid a pistol to his ear, for I was in some heat.

'Gin you war King Geordie himsel', aye, or Cumberland either, ye shall come wi' me and help to catch the gauger,' said I.

For I bethought me that it would be a bonny ploy, and one long to be talked about

in these parts, thus to lay by the heels the Exciseman and make him tramp to Glasserton to kidnap himself.

The man with the bandy legs was taking a while to consider, so I said to him: 'She is a guid pistol and new primed!'

'I 'll come wi' ye!' said he.

So I set him first on the road, and left my horse in the stables of Myrtoun. It was the gloam of the morning when we got to the turn of the path by which, if he were to come at all, the new gauger would ride from Glasserton. And lo! as if we had set a tryst, there he was coming over the heathery braes at a brisk trot. So I covered him with my pistol, and took his horse by the reins, thinking no more of the other man I had taken for the gauger before.

'Dismount, my lad,' I said. 'Ye dinna ken me, but I ken you. Come here, my brisk landlouper, and help to haud him!'

I saw the stranger who had come with me sneaking off, but with my other pistol I

brought him to a stand. So together we got the gauger into a little thicket or planting. And here, willing or unwilling, we kept him all day, till we were sure that the stuff would all be run, and the long trains of honest smugglers on good horses far on their way to the towns of the north.

Then very conscientiously I counted out the half of the tale of golden guineas Master William had given me, and put them into the pocket of the gauger's coat.

'Gin ye are a good, still-tongued kind of cattle, there is more of that kind of yellow oats where these came from,' said I. 'But lie ye here snug as a paitrick for an hour yet by the clock, lest even yet ye should come to harm!'

So there we left him, not very sorely angered, for all he had posed as so efficient and zealous a King's officer.

'Now,' said I to the man that had helped me, 'I promised ye half o' Maister William's guineas, that he bade me keep, for

I allow that it micht hae been a different job but for your help. And here they are. Ye shall never say that Robin of Airyolan roguit ony man, — even a feckless toon's birkie wi' bandy legs!'

The man laughed and took the siller, saying, 'Thank'ee!' with an arrogant air as if he handled bags of them every day. But, nevertheless, he took them, and I parted from him, wishing him well, which was more than he did to me. But I know how to use civility upon occasion.

When I reached home I told my father, and described the man I had met. But he could make no guess at him. Nor had I any myself till the next rent day, when my father, having a lame leg where the colt had kicked him, sent me down to pay the owing. The factor I knew well, but I had my money in hand and little I cared for him. But what was my astonishment to find, sitting at the table with him, the very same man who had helped me to lay the Exciseman by the

heels. But now, I thought, there was a strangely different air about him.

And what astonished me more, it was this man, and not the factor, who spoke first to me.

'Aye, young Robin of Airyolan, and are you here? Ye are a chiel with birr and smeddum! There are the bones of a man in ye! Hae ye settled with the gauger for shackling him by the hill of Physgill?'

Now, as I have said, I thole snash from no man, and I gave him the word back sharply.

'Hae ye settled wi' him yoursel', sir? For it was you that tied the tow rope!'

My adversary laughed, and looked not at all ill-pleased.

He pointed to the five gold Georges on the tables.

'Hark ye, Robin of Airyolan, these are the five guineas ye gied to me like an honest man. I 'll forgie ye for layin' the pistol to my lug, for after all ye are some credit to the land

that fed ye. Gin ye promise to wed a decent lass, I 'll e'en gie ye a farm o' your ain. And as sure as my name is Sir William Maxwell, ye shall sit your lifetime rent free, for the de'il's errand that ye took me on the nicht of the brandy-running at the Clone.'

I could have sunken through the floor when I heard that it was Sir William himself, — whom, because he had so recently returned from foreign parts after a sojourn of many years, I had never before seen.

Then both the factor and the laird laughed heartily at my discomfiture.

'Ken ye o' ony lass that wad tak' up wi' ye, Robin?' said Sir William.

'Half a dozen o' them, my lord,' said I. 'Lassies are neither ill to seek nor hard to find when Robin of Airyolan gangs a-coortin'!'

'Losh preserve us!' cried the laird, slapping his thigh, 'but I mysel' never sallied forth to woo a lass so blithely confident!'

I said nothing, but dusted my knee-

breeks. For the laird was no very good-looking man, being grey as a badger.

'An' mind ye maun see to it that the bairns are a' loons, and as staunch and stark as yoursel'!' said the factor.

'A man can but do his best,' answered I, very modestly as I thought. For I never can tell why it is that the folk will always say that I have a good opinion of myself. But neither, on the other hand, can I tell why I should not.

THE PATH OF MURTOGH

BY

HAROLD FREDERIC

THE PATH OF MURTOGH

A CURSE is laid on one long narrow strip of the sea, down in front of Dunlogher.

No matter how lifeless the sunlit air may hang above; no matter how silken-smooth the face of the waters nearest by, lifting themselves without a ripple in the most indolent summer swell, — an angry churning goes always forward here. Disordered currents will never tire of their coiling and writhing somewhere underneath: the surface is streaked with sinister markings like black shadows, which yet are no shadows at all; and these glide without ceasing out and in among the twisted lines of grey-white scum, and everything moves and nothing changes, till Judgment Day. It has the name of the

Slighe Mhuircheartaigh (spoken Shlee Vurharthee), or the Path of Murtogh.

Though 't is well known that the grandest ling and turbot and wonderful other big fishes lie swaying themselves in the depths of this wicked water, with giant crayfish and crabs to bear them company, the fishermen of Dunmanus and Goleen and Crookhaven, and even the strangers from Cape Clear, would not buy a soul from Purgatory at the price of drawing a net through it. They have a great wish to please the buyers in the English ships, and the Scotch and Manx, O yes,—but a creel of gold would not tempt them to meddle in 'Murty's Path.' They steer their boats far to one side, and bless themselves as they pass, in the manner of their fathers and grandfathers before them.

These poor men, having not much of the Irish now, and not rightly understanding what their elders may have heard the truth of, say that this snake-like forbidding stretch

wears its name from Murty *Oge* O'Sullivan. Their thought is that the uncanny boiling began in the wake of the English *Speedwell*, as the corpse of the vanquished privateer spun and twirled at her keel through the foam, on its savage last journey from Castletown to Cork. But it is enough to look down at this evil place, to see that the malediction upon it must be older than Murty *Oge's* time, which, in the sight of Dunlogher, was as yesterday. Why, men are living this year who talked with men who saw his head spiked over South gate. There were no great curses left unused in Ireland at so late a day as his. And again, would it be the waters of Dunlogher that would tear themselves for an O'Sullivan?

No, the curse threads back a dozen lives behind poor Murty *Oge*. The strange currents weave and twine, and the greasy foam spreads and gathers, gathers and spreads, in the path of another, whose birthright it was that they should baptise him. The true tale

is of Murty the Proud, or if you will have his style from the Book of Schull, — Murtogh *Mordha* O'Mahony, chief in Dunlogher. And his time is not so distant, in one way, as men take account of years. But in another it is too remote for any clear vision, because the 'little people' of the old, fearful kind had left every other part of Ireland, and they were just halting together for a farewell pause in Dunlogher, by reason of its being the last end of the land, and their enchantments fanned up a vapour about Murty *Mordha* to his undoing. And it is as if that mist still rose between us and his story.

I

When the sun began to sink out of sight, down behind the sea, two men stood on the edge of the great cliff of Dunlogher, their faces turned to the west.

The yellow flame from the sky shone full in the eyes of Murtogh, and he held his

huge, bare head erect with boldness, and stared back at it without blinking. His companion, a little, shrivelled old man, whom he held by the arm, had the glowing light on his countenance as well, but his eyelids were shut. He bent himself against his chief's thick shoulder and trembled.

'Are we to the brink itself?' he asked; his aged voice shook when he spoke.

'Here, where I stand, when I would grip you, and hold you forth at the length of my arm, and open my hand, you would fall a hundred fathoms in the air.' Murtogh's free arm and hand made the terrible gesture to fit his words, but he tightened his protecting clasp upon the other, and led him back a few paces. The old man groaned his sigh of relief.

'It is you who are the brave nobleman, Murty,' he whispered, admiringly. 'There is none to equal your strength, or your grand courage, in all the land. And the heart of pure gold along with it!'

Murtogh tossed his big head, to shake the twisted forelock of his hair to one side. 'I looked straight into the sun at noon on St. John's Day,' he said, quietly, with the pride of a child. 'If it were a hundred times as bright, I would look at it, and never fear for my eyes. I would hold my own son out here, stretched over the abyss, and he would be no safer in his bed. Whatever I wished to do, I would do it.'

'You would — O, you would!' assented the old man, in tones of entire sincerity.

The chieftain kept his eyes on the sky-line, beneath which, as the radiance above deepened, the waters grew ashen and coldly dark. Musing, he held his silence for a time. Then, with abruptness, he asked: —

'What age were you, Owny Hea, when the McSwineys put out your eyes? Were you strong enough to remember the sun well?'

'I was of no strength at all,' the other whimpered, the tragedy of his childhood

affecting his speech on the instant. 'I was in my mother's arms. There were the men breaking in through the wall, and the kine bellowing outside, and my father cut down; and then it was like my mother drew her cloak tight over my head, — and no one came ever to take it off again. I forget the sun.'

Murtogh nodded his head. 'I will go to Muskerry some day,' he said, in a kindly way. 'I cannot tell when, just now; but I will go, and I will burn and desolate everything for six miles around, and you shall have a bag for your harp made of eyelids of the McSwineys.'

Old Owny lifted his sightless face toward his master, and smiled with wistful affection. 'Ah, Murty, dear,' he expostulated, mildly, 'it is you who have the grand nature; but think, Murty, — I am a very old man, and no kin of yours. It is fifty years since the last man who took my eyes drew breath. If you went now, no living soul could tell what

you came for, or why the great suffering was put upon them. And, moreover, the O'Mahonys Carbery have wives from the McSwineys these three generations. No feud lies now.'

The lord of Dunlogher growled sharply between his teeth, and Owny shrank further back.

'How long will you be learning,' Murtogh demanded, with an arrogant note in his voice, 'that I have no concern in the O'Mahonys Carbery, or the O'Mahonys *Fonn-Iartarach*, or any other? I do not take heed of Conogher of Ardintenant, or Teige of Rosbrin, or Donogh of Dunmanus, or Donal of Leamcon. I will give them all my bidding to do, and they will do it, or I will kill them, and spoil their castles. You could not behold it, but you have your song from the words of others: how last year I fell upon Diarmaid *Bhade*, and crushed him and his house, and slew his son, and brought away his herds. His father's father and

mine were brothers. He is nearer to me in blood than the rest, yet I would not spare him. I made his Ballydevlin a nest for owls and bats. Let the others observe what I did. I am in Dunlogher, and I am the O'Mahony here, and I look the sun in the face like an eagle. Put that to your song!'

The sound came to them, from the walled bawn and gateways beyond the Three Castles, a hundred yards behind, of voices in commotion. The old bard lifted his head, and his brow scored itself in lines of listening attention. If Murtogh heard, he gave no sign, but gazed again in meditation out upon the vast waste of waters, blackening now as the purple reflections of the twilight waned.

'Blind men have senses that others lack,' he remarked at last. 'Tell me, you, does the earth we stand on seem ever to you to be turning round?'

Owny shuddered a little at the thought which came to him. 'When you led me

out beyond here, and I felt the big round sea-pinks under my feet, and remembered they grew only on the very edge — ' he began.

'Not that,' the chief broke in, ''t is not my meaning. But at Rosbrin there was a book written by Fineen the son of Diarmaid, an uncle to my father's father, and my father heard it read from this book that the world turned round one way, like a duck on a spit, and the sun turned round the other way, and that was why they were apart all night. And often I come here, and I swear there is a movement under my feet. But elsewhere there is none, not in the bawn, or in the towers, or anywhere else but just here.'

The old man inclined his face, as if he could see the ground he stood upon, but shook his head after a moment's waiting. 'It would not be true, Murty,' he suggested. 'Old Fineen had a mighty scholarship, as I have heard, and he made an end to edify the angels, but — but — '

Murtogh did not wait for the hesitating

conclusion. 'I saw his tomb when I was a lad, in the chapel at Rosbrin. He was laid at his own desire under a weight of stone like my wall here. I saw even then how foolish it was. These landsmen have no proper sense. How will they rise at the blessed Resurrection, with all that burden of stone to hold them down? I have a better understanding than that. I buried my father, as he buried his father, out yonder in the sea. And I will be buried there, too, and my son after me — and if I have other children — ' he stole a swift glance at the old man's withered face as he spoke — 'if I have others, I say, it will be my command that they shall follow me there, when their time comes. I make you witness to that wish, Owny Hea.'

The bard hung his head. 'As if my time would not come first!' he said, for the mere sake of saying something. Then, gathering courage, he pulled upon the strong arm which was still locked in his,

and raised his head to speak softly in the O'Mahony's ear.

'If only the desire of your heart were given you, Murty,' he murmured; 'if only once I could hold a babe of yours to my breast, and put its pretty little hands in my beard, — I 'd be fit to pray for the men who took my eyes from me. And Murty dear,' — his voice rose in tremulous entreaty as he went on, — 'tell me, Murty, — I 'm of an age to be your father's father, and I 've no eyesight to shame you, — is she — is your holy wife coming to see her duty differently? Have you hope that — that — ?'

Murtogh turned abruptly on his heel, swinging his companion round with him. They walked a dozen paces towards the sea-gate of the castles, before he spoke. 'You have never seen her, Owny!' he said, gravely. 'You do not know at all how beautiful she is. It is not in the power of your mind to imagine it. There is no one like her in all the world. She is not just

flesh and blood like you, Owny, or even like me. I am a great lord among men, Owny, and I am not afraid of any man. I would put the MacCarthy, or even the Earl of Desmond, over my cliff like a rat, if he came to me here, and would not do me honour. But whenever I come where she sits, I am like a little dirty boy, frightened before a great shrine of our Blessed Lady, all with jewels and lights and incense. I take shame to myself when she looks at me, that there are such things in my heart for her to see.'

Owny sighed deeply. 'The grandest princess in the world might be proud to be mated to you, Murty,' he urged.

'True enough,' responded Murtogh, with candour. 'But she is not a princess, — or any mere woman at all. She is a saint. Perhaps she is more still. Listen, Owny. Do you remember how I took her, — how I swam for her through the breakers — and snapped the bone of my arm to keep the mast of their wreck from crushing her when the wave

flung it upon us, and still made land with her head on my neck, and hung to the bare rock against all the devils of the sea sucking to pull me down — ?'

'Is it not all in my song?' said Owny, with gentle reproach.

'Owny, man, listen!' said Murtogh, halting and giving new impressiveness to his tone. 'I took her from the water. Her companions were gone; their vessel was gone. Did we ever see sign of them afterward? And her family, — the Sigersons of that island beyond Tiobrad, — when men of mine sailed thither, and asked for Hugh, son of Art, were they not told that the O'Flaherty had passed over the island, and left nothing alive on it the size of a mussel shell? Draw nearer to me, Owny. You will be thinking the more without your eyes. Have you thought that it may be she — whisper now! — that she may belong to the water?'

They stood motionless in the gathering twilight, and the bard turned the problem

over deliberately. At last he seemed to shake his head. 'They would not be displaying such piety, as the old stories of them go,' he suggested, 'or — I mean it well to you, Murty — or breaking husbands' hearts with vows of celibacy.'

The O'Mahony pushed the old man from him. 'Then if she be a saint,' he cried, 'why then it were better for me to make ten thousand more blind men like you, and tear my own eyes out, and lead you all headlong over the cliff there, than risk the littlest offence to her pure soul!'

The old bard held out a warning hand. 'People are coming!' he said. Then gliding towards his chief, he seized the protecting arm again, and patted it, and fawned against it. 'Where you go, Murty,' he said eagerly, 'I follow. What you say, I say.'

Some dancing lights had suddenly revealed themselves at the corner of the nearest castle wall. Murtogh had not realised before that it was dusk. 'They will

be looking for me,' he said, and moved forward, guiding his companion's steps. The thought that with Owny it was always dark rose in him, and drove other things away.

Three men with torches came up, — rough men with bare legs and a single skirt-like tunic of yellow woollen cloth, and uncovered heads with tangled and matted shocks of black hair. The lights they bore gleamed again in the fierce eyes which looked out from under their forelocks.

'O'Mahony,' one of them said, 'the *liathan* priest is at the gate, — young Donogh, son of Donogh *Bhade* who fled to Spain. He is called Father Donatus now.'

'What will he want here?' growled Murtogh. 'I have beaten his father; if I have the mind, his tonsure will not hold me from beating him also.'

'He has brought a foreign Spaniard, a young man with breeches and a sword, who comes to you from the King of Spain.'

Murtogh straightened himself, and disengaged the arm of the blind man. 'Run forward, you two,' he ordered sharply, 'and call all the men from the bawns and the cattle and the boats, and I will have them light torches, and stand in a line from the second tower to the postern, and show their spears well in front, and be silent. I will not have any man talk but myself, or thrust himself into notice. We were Kings of Rathlin, and we have our own matters to discuss with the Kings of Spain.'

II.

Three score fighting men, some bearing lights, and all showing shields, and spears, or javelins, or long hooked axes, crowded in the semblance of a line along the narrow way to the large keep — and behind them packed four times their number of women and children — watched Murtogh when he brought his guests past from the gate.

He moved proudly up the boreen, with a slow step, and the gleam of a high nature in his eyes. His own people saw afresh how great was his right to be proud. The broad hard muscles of his legs, straining to burst their twisted leather thongs as he walked; the vast weight and thickness of the breast and shoulders, under the thin summer cloak of cloth from the Low Countries which he held wrapped tight about them; the corded sinews of his big bare neck; above all, the lion-like head, with its dauntless regard and its splendid brown-black mane, and the sparkle of gold in the bushing glibb on his brow, — where else in all Ireland would their match be found? But for that strange injunction to silence, the fighters of the sept would be splitting the air with yells for their chieftain. They struck their weapons together, and made the gaze they bent upon him burn with meaning, and he, without looking, read it, and bore himself more nobly yet; and the mothers and wives and little ones, huddled

behind in the darkness, groaned aloud with the pain of their joy in Murty *mordha.*

It swelled the greatness of Murtogh when they looked upon those who followed him. 'It is the *soggarth liathan,*' they whispered, at view of the young priest, with his pointed face and untimely whitened hair. He would not turn his ferret glance to right or left, as he followed close in his cousin's lordly footsteps, for the reason that these sea-wolves of Dunlogher had ravaged and burnt his father's country within the year, and slain his brother, and gnashed their teeth now, even as he passed, for rage at the sight of him.

And the messenger who came to speak to Murty the words of the King of Spain! They grinned as they stared upon him. An eel-fly, a lame fledgeling gull, a young crab that has lost its shell, — thus they murmured of him. His legs were scarce the bigness of a Cape woman's arms, and were clad in red silken cloth stretched as close as skin. He

had foolish little feet, with boots of yellow leather rising to the knee, and from the mid-thigh to the waist were unseemly bulging breeches, blown out like a buoy, and gashed downwise with stripes of glowing colours, repeated again in his flowing sleeves. His burnished steel corslet and long reed-like sword would be toys for children in Dunlogher. His face, under its wide plumed hat of drab felt, was that of no soldier at all, — a thin smooth rounded face of a strange smoky darkness of hue, with tiny upturned moustachios, and delicately bended nose. And the eyes of him! They seemed to be the half of his countenance in size, what with their great dusky-white balls, and sloe black centres, and their thick raven fringes and brows that joined each other. The armed kernes who stood nearest took not much heed of these eyes, but the older women, peeping between their shoulders, saw little else, and they made the sign of the cross at the sight.

When two hours had passed, the baser folk of Dunlogher knew roughly what was in the wind. Two wayfaring men of humble station had come in the train of the Spaniard, and though they had no Irish, their story somehow made itself told. A ship from Spain, which indeed Dunlogher had seen pass a week before, had put in at Dingle, on the Kerry coast, and had landed James Fitzmaurice, the Papal legate Sanders, some other clergy, and a score and more Spanish gentlemen or men at arms, with a banner blessed by the Holy Father. A great army from Spain and Italy would follow in their wake. But, meantime, the first comers were building a fort at Smerwick, and the clan of Fitzgerald was up, and messengers were flying through the length and breadth of Munster and Connaught, passing the word to the Catholic chiefs that the hour of driving the English into the sea was at hand.

The lower floors of the castle and the pleasant grassy bawns outside, cool with the

soft sea wind of the summer night, were stirred to a common fervour by these tidings. The other O'Mahonys, the chiefs of Dunmanus and Dunbeacon to the north, of Ballydevlin, Leamcon, Ardintenant, and Rosbrin to the south, and elsewhere in Desmond the O'Sullivans, MacCarthys, O'Driscolls and the rest, were clashing their shields. Ah, when they should see Murty striding into the field!

In the big hall overhead, where — after three courses of stone stairs were climbed, so narrow that a man in armour must needs walk sideways — the abode of the chieftain and his own blood began, Murtogh was ready to hear the message of the King of Spain.

The broad rough-hewn table, with its dishes of half-cleaned bones and broken cheeses and bread, its drinking horns and flagons, and litter of knives and spoons, had been given over to the master's greyhounds, who stood with forepaws on the board and

insinuated their long necks and muzzles noiselessly here and there among the remains of the meal. A clump of reeds, immersed in a brazier of fish oil, burned smokily among the dishes for light.

When, at the finish of the eating, Murtogh had given the signal for departure to the dozen strong men nearest akin to him, or in his best favour, there were left only his son, a slow, good lad born of a first wife long since dead, the blind Owny, the Spaniard and the *liathan* (or prematurely grey) young priest.

Then Murtogh said to this last man: 'Donogh, son of Donogh *Bhade*, I have not frowned on you nor struck you, for the reason that you are my guest. But because my hand is open to you, it is no reason that I should lie, and pretend that I am your friend or you mine. Your brother, Diarmaid, the one I could not get to kill, calls himself my heir, and twice has sought to take the life of my son here, my Donogh *baoth*.

Therefore, I will have you go now, and sit below with the others, or read your prayers in your chamber where you are to sleep, because I will hear now what the King of Spain says to me, and that is not meant for your ears.'

The priest stood on his feet. 'Your pride does not become you, Murty *Mordha*,' he said, 'when I am come to you for your soul's sake and the glory of religion.' His voice was thin and high-pitched, but there was no fear in it.

'I will not be taking trouble for my soul just now,' replied Murty; 'that will be for another time, when I am like to die. And then I will have my own confessor, and not you, nor anyone like you. So you will go now, as I bid you.'

Father Donatus, standing still, curled his lips in a hard smile. 'You are a great man, Murty! You could dishonour my father, and slay my brother like the headstrong bullock that you are; but there are things you can-

not do. You cannot lay your finger to me, because I come on the business of God.'

'It is the business of the King of Spain that I will be thinking of,' said Murty, with curtness.

'They are the same,' rejoined the young priest. 'And you are wrong to say what you will be thinking of, because you have not a mind to think at all. If you could think, you would know that you cannot have the words of the King of Spain except when I interpret them to you. This noble gentleman who comes with me speaks more tongues than one, but he has no Irish, and you, — it is well known that you have nothing else. Don Tello has sat at your side for two hours, and you have not observed that each word between him and you came and went through me. Oh, yes; you are a great man, Murty, but your mind is not of a high order.'

The chieftain rose also. The blood came into his face, and he laid a strong hand on the hilt of his broad sword. But the foot

that he lifted he set down again; and he looked at his kinsman, the *liathan* priest, and did not move towards him. 'You are in the right to wear a gown,' he said slowly, 'because you have the tongue and the evil temper of an ugly girl. You speak foolish things in your heat, and they disgrace you. I have the best mind that any man in my family ever had. I have more thoughts in my mind than there are words in your Latin book. I would speak whatever I chose to this gentleman, and I would understand his speech when I troubled myself to do so. But I will not do that, — for some time at least; I will have my wife come, and she will sit here, and she will tell me his words, and I will be taking my ease.'

Murtogh *Mordha* called his son to his side, and gave him a message to deliver.

The priest, smiling in his cold way, leant over and spoke for the space of a minute in a tongue strange to Dunlogher into the Spaniard's ear. Then he stood erect, and

gazed at Murtogh with an ill-omened look, and so turned and strode after the lad out of the door.

III

A young woman of the rarest beauty, tall and slender, and with the carriage of a great lady, came into the chamber and moved across to the high, carved chair which Murtogh made ready for her, and seated herself upon it as upon a throne. She had a pale fair skin, and her hair, coiled heavily in plaits upon her shoulders, was of the hue of a red harvest sun. There were jewels in this hair and upon her throat and hands, and her long robes were of rich shining stuffs. A chain of wooden beads, with a cross of gold at the end, hung from her girdle, and she gathered this in her fingers as she sat.

The boy, Donogh *baoth*, came with her, and crouched in humility on the floor at her side. His thick form and dark hair, and his over-large head, spoke a likeness now to his

father which was not to be noted before. When, as if under the spell of her attraction, he nestled nearer the lady's chair, and touched her garment with his hand, she drew it away.

Murtogh *Mordha*, before he took his seat again, and leant back to half lie upon the skins thrown over it, told her the Spaniard's name, and explained to her his errand. The Spaniard, bowing himself low, sank upon one knee, and reverently kissed her hand, as Murty had seen his father kiss the ring of the Bishop of Ross. He was proud to observe this, because his wife was holier and more saintly still than any bishop.

The lady smiled upon the Spaniard, and all that she said to him, and he to her, was in his tongue. 'I cannot speak it well,' she said. Her voice had the sweetness of a perfume in the air. 'I lived at Seville, in the old convent there, for only two years. I have no joy of remembrance now, save in the peace and charm of those years there; but I

fear my memory of the dear speech is dimmed. But I will listen with all my ears, — and oh, so gladly!'

She fastened her regard upon his eyes, — the great, rolling, midnight eyes, — and held it there, that she might the better follow his speech.

'Beautiful lady,' the Spaniard said, 'I learn only now the power our language, spoken by such lips, may have to enthrall the hearing. Condone my error, I pray you, but I caught from Father Donatus that you were this strong chieftain's wife, and I see that you are his daughter; and even that is strange, to look upon him and *you*.'

'I am his wife, but only in name, naught else,' she answered. The wave of comprehension sweeping over the surface of the Spaniard's eyes made instant confidence between them. 'I am in captivity here. He is a pirate, a Goth, a murderous barbarian. He and his savages here — but of this more a little hence. I beg you now to speak some-

thing of your mission, — your errand here. He is as helpless to follow our words as one of those hounds; but no dog is keener to suspicion.'

The Spaniard, with eager swiftness of speech, piled one upon another the curtailed topics of his business, The lady, moving her fingers along the beads, gleaned the narrow pith of it, and dressed it forth in new phrases for the lord of Dunlogher.

'*The King of Spain will send this month*,' she said in the Irish, '*a mighty army to drive the heretic English to the last man from this Island of Saints. They have wounded God too long! The last drop of Heaven's patience is dried up by their crimes. Their Queen was not born in lawful wedlock, and the Blessed Sacraments are daily profaned by her and her accursed people. Those who sustain and honour God now will be sustained and honoured by Him through glorious Eternity.*'

'These things are well known to me,' said Murtogh. 'I would not need the King of

Spain to tell them to me. How will he speak concerning myself?'

The lady was not afraid to smile into the eyes of the Spaniard. 'You are to speak after a moment or two,' she told him, with a calm voice; 'but hear me this little first. My heart is broken here. I do not know how I have had the courage to live. These jewels I wear, the fabrics of my raiment, the wines on the board yonder, are all the booty of blood-stained waves down at the foot of this terrible cliff. He and his savages burn false lights, and lure ships to the rocks, and rob and murder their people. It was thus unhappily I came here, and in fear of my life, while I was still half dead from the water, I suffered the marriage words to be read over me, — but now you must speak.'

'I would show you tears rather than words, dear lady,' the Spaniard said; 'and blows on your behalf more preferably than either. Father Donatus whispered the tithe of this to me. The whole truth burns like

fire in my heart. As my fathers gave their life blood to drive the infidel from Grenada, — so I lay my own poor life at your dear feet. If aught but harm to you could come from it, I would slay him now where he lolls there on the skins. He is looking at you now, waiting for you to speak.'

'*The King of Spain has heard much of you,*' she began in the Irish, without turning her head. '*He is filled with admiration for your strength and valour. He desires deeply to know what you will be doing. When you will take arms, and join him with your great might in the battles, then there cannot be any doubt of his victory.*'

'That it is easy to see,' replied Murtogh. 'But the King of Spain's battles are not my battles. There would be some reason to be given, to call me out for his wars. The English will be doing me no hurt. They cannot come here to me, by water or by land; and if they did I would not let any of them depart alive. For what cause should I

go to them? Let the King of Spain tell me what it would be in his mind to do in my behalf, when I did this thing for him.'

The lady spoke to the Spaniard. 'The last of my people are killed. They would not have seemed different to you perhaps, — to you who were bred in the gentle graces of Spain, — but they were not the ferocious barbarians these O'Mahonys are. My father was learned in Latin and English, and it was his dream that I should wed in Spain.'

'Oh, rapturous vision!' said Don Tello, with new flames kindling in his eyes. 'And if it shall be proved prophetic as well, beautiful lady! Something of this, too, the priest whispered; but the precious words return to me as your dear lips breathed them forth, — "wife only in name." I long to hear them once again.'

The lady repeated them, with tender deliberation, and a languorous gleam in her blue eyes began to answer his burning gaze. 'I have held the fierce beast at arm's length,'

she said, 'because he is also a fool. I would give a year of my life to be able to laugh in his face, and slap these beads across it. I have told him — the blessed thought came to me even while we knelt at the altar together — that I am bound by a vow. His big empty head is open to all the fancies that fly. He believes that an enchanted woman drives up her horses from the bottom of the lake, down at the foot of the small tower here, every night for food; and he spreads corn for them which the thieves about him fatten on. He believes in witches rising from the sea, and leprechauns, and changelings, like any ignorant herdsman out in the bog, but he is a frightened Churchman, too. He believes that I am a saint!'

'As I swear by the grave of my mother, you are!' panted Don Tello. 'But speak now to him.'

'*The King of Spain will do very great things in your behalf*,' she recited, in Murtogh's tongue. '*He will make you of the rank of a*

commander in his armies, and he will ennoble you.'

'I am noble now,' Murtogh made comment, 'as noble as the King of Spain himself. I am not a MacCarthy or an O'Driscoll, that I would be craving titles to my name.'

'*Then he will send large rich ships here,*' she began again, with weariness in her tone, '*to bring you costly presents. And the Pope, he will grant you ten years' indulgence, — or it may be twenty.*'

'Ask him,' broke in Murtogh, sitting up with a brightened face, his hand outstretched to secure silence for the thought that stirred within him, — 'ask if the Holy Father would be granting just the one spiritual favour I would beg. Will this gentleman bind the King of Spain to that?'

'And may I wholly trust,' she asked the Spaniard, with half-closed eyes, through which shone the invitation of her mood, 'may I trust in your knightly proffer of help? Do not answer till I have finished. You are

the first who has come to me — here in this awful dungeon — and I have opened my heart to you as perhaps I should not. But you have the blood of youth in your veins, like me; you are gallant and of high lineage; you are from the land where chivalry is the law of gentle life, — is it true that you will be my champion?'

The Spaniard rose with solemn dignity, though his great eyes flashed devouringly upon her, and his breast heaved under its cuirass. He half lifted his sword from the sheath, and kissed the cross of its hilt. 'Oh, my beloved, I swear!' he said, in sombre earnestness.

She translated the action and utterance to Murtogh. '*Whatever of a spiritual nature you would crave of his Holiness he would grant.*'

'But it would be a cruel time of waiting, to send all the long way to Rome and back,' he objected, 'and this matter lies like lead upon my soul.'

She looked up into the Spaniard's eyes, and let her own lashes tremble, and fed the ravening conflagration of his gaze with a little sigh. 'It would be very sweet to believe,' she murmured, 'too sweet for sense, I fear me. Nay, Don Tello, I need not such a world of persuasion — only — only — lift your right hand, with thumb and two fingers out, and swear again. And say, "Bera, I swear!"'

'It is your name?' he asked, and as she closed her eyes in assent, and slowly opened them to behold his oath, he lifted the fingers and waved them toward her, and passionately whispered, 'Bera, queen of my Heaven, star of my soul, I swear!'

'*That is the sign of the Pope himself*,' she explained, with indifference, to Murtogh. '*Whatever wish you offered up you have it already granted. It is Don Tello who bears the holy authority from the Pope.*'

The lord of Dunlogher hurled himself to his feet with a boisterous energy before

which the lady, wondering, drew herself away. He stretched his bared arms towards her, then flung them upward as in invocation to the skies. The beatitude of some vast triumph illumined his glance.

'Oh, then, indeed, I am Murty *Mordha!*' he cried. 'It is I who am prouder than all the Kings on earth! It is I who have won my love! Oh, glory to the Heavens that send me this joy! Glory and the praise of the saints! Glory! Glory!'

The rhapsody was without meaning to the Spaniard. He stared in astonishment at the big chieftain with the shining countenance who shouted with such vehemence up at the oaken roof. Turning a glance of inquiry at the lady, he saw that she had grown white-faced, and was cowering backward in her chair.

'Our Lady save us!' she gasped at him in Spanish. 'He has asked the Pope to absolve me from my vow.'

Don Tello, no wiser, put his hand to his

sword. 'Tell me quickly, what it is? What am I to do?' he demanded of her.

Murtogh, with a smile from the heart moistening his eyes and transfiguring all his face, strode to the Spaniard, and grasped his reluctant hand between his own broad palms, and gripped it with the fervour of a giant.

'I would have you tell him,' he called out to the Lady Bera. 'Tell him that he has no other friend in any land who will do for him what Murty *Mordha* will be doing. I will ride with him into the battle, and take all his blows on my own back. I will call him my son and my brother. Whatever he will wish, I will give it to him. And all his enemies I will slay and put down for him to walk upon. Oh, Bera, the jewel restored to me, the beautiful gem I saved from the waters, tell him these things for me! Why will your lips be so silent? Would they be waiting for my kisses to waken them? And Donogh, son of mine, come hither and take my other son's hand. I will hear you swear

to keep my loyalty to him the same as myself. And, Owny Hea, — hither, man! You cannot see my benefactor, the man I will be giving my life for, but you have heard his voice. You will not forget it.'

The absence of all other sound of a sudden caught Murtogh's ear, and checked his flow of joyous words. He looked with bewilderment at the figure of his wife in the chair, motionless with clenched hands on her knees, and eyes fixed in a dazed stare upon vacancy, He turned again, and noted that Owny Hea had come up to the Spaniard, and was standing before him so close that their faces were near touching.

The old blind man had the smile of an infant on his withered face. He lifted his left hand to the Spaniard's breast and passed it curiously over the corselet and its throat-plate and arm-holes, muttering in Irish to himself, 'I will not forget. I will not at all forget.'

A zigzag flash of light darted briefly some-

where across Murtogh's vision. Looking with more intentness he saw that both the blind man's hands were at the arm-pit of the Spaniard, and pulled upon something not visible. Don Tello's big eyes seemed bursting from their black-fringed sockets His face was distorted, and he curled the fingers of his hand like stiffened talons, and clawed once into the air with them. Then Owny Hea pushed him, and he pitched sprawling against Murtogh's legs, and rolled inert to the floor. His hot blood washed over Murtogh's sandalled feet.

A woman's shriek of horror burst into the air, and the hounds moaned and glided forward. Murtogh did not know why he stood so still. He could not rightly think upon what was happening, or put his mind to it. The bones in his arms were chilled, and would not move for him. He gazed with round eyes at Owny, and at the red dripping knife which the bard stretched out to him. He felt the rough tongue of a dog

on his ankle. The dark corners of the chamber seemed to be moving from him a long distance away. There was a spell upon him, and he could not tremble.

The voice of Owny Hea came to him, and though it was soundless, like the speech of Dreamland, he heard all its words; 'Murtogh son of Teige, I have slain your guest for the reason that I have the Spanish, and I knew the meaning of his words to this woman, and he could not live any longer. The *liathan* priest, when he would be going, told this stranger that she you called your wife was your enemy, and made a mockery of you, and would give ear gladly to any means of dishonouring you. And the *liathan* priest spoke truly. While the woman repeated lies to you of the King of Spain and the Pope, she whispered foul scandal of you, and wicked love-words to that dog's-meat at your feet. It is I, Owen son of Aodh, who tell you these things. And now you know what you have to do!'

Murtogh turned slowly to the lady. She lay, without motion, in her chair, her head limp upon her shoulder, and the whiteness of sea foam on her cheek. Thoughts came again into his brain.

'I have the wisest mind of all in my family,' he said; 'I know what it is I will be doing.'

He drew the short sword from his girdle, and put his nail along its edge.

'Donogh *baoth*,' he said to his son, 'go below and seek out Conogher *tuathal* and Shane *buidhe*, and bid them seize the *liathan* priest between them, and bring him to me here where I am. And you will take some sleep for yourself then, for it is a late hour.'

The lad looked at the pale lady with the closed eyes, and at the sword in his father's hand. He set his teeth together, and lifted his head.

'I am of years enough to see it all,' he said. 'I have no sleep on my eyes.'

Murtogh bent over the corpse at his feet,

and caressed the boy's head with his hand. 'I will not call you *baoth* (simple) any more,' he said, fondly. 'You are my true son, and here is my ring for your finger, and you may return with them when they fetch me my *liathan* cousin.'

IV

Next morning young Donogh gave his word to the men of Dunlogher, and they obeyed him, for in the one night he had thrown aside his sluggish boyhood, and they saw his father's ring on his finger, and heard a good authority in his voice. They came out from the Western gate at his command, three-score and more, and stood from the brink of the cliff inward, with their weapons in their hands, and made a path between them. But the women and children Donogh bade remain within the bawn, and he shut the inner gate upon them. It was as if the smell of blood came to them there, for the old women put up a lamentation of death,

and the others cried aloud, till the noise spread to the men on the cliff. These looked one to another and held their silence.

They did not clash their spears together when, after a long waiting, Murtogh came from the gate, and walked toward them. A fine rain was in the air, and the skies and sea were grey, and the troubled man would have no spirit for such greeting.

He bore upon his broad back a great shapeless bundle thrice his own bulk. The weight of it bent his body, and swayed his footsteps as he came. The cover of it was of skins of wild beasts, sewn rudely with thongs, and through the gaps in this cover some of the men saw stained foreign cloths and the plume of a hat, and some a shoe with a priest's buckle, and some the marble hand of a fair woman. But no word was spoken, and Murtogh, coming to the edge, heaved his huge shoulders upward, and the bundle leaped out of sight.

Then Murtogh turned and looked all his fighting-men in their faces, and smiled in gentleness upon them, and they saw that in that same night, while the 'little people' had changed Donogh into a man, they had made Murtogh a child again.

'She came up from the water,' he said to them, in a voice no man knew. 'It was I who brought her out of the water, and fought for her with the demons under the rocks, and beat all of them off. But one of them I did not make the sign of the Cross before, and that one is the King of Spain; and so he has wrought me this mischief, and made all my labour as nothing; and she is in the water again, and I must be going to fetch her out rightly this time.'

Murtogh sprang like a deer into the air, with a mighty bound which bore him far over the edge of the cliff. Some there were, in the throng that sprang forward, agile enough to be looking down the abyss before his descent was finished. These, to their

amazement, beheld a miracle. For the great fall did not kill Murtogh *Mordha*, but the waters boiled and rose to meet him, and held him up on their tossing currents as he swam forward, and marked with a pallid breadth of foam his path out to sea, farther and farther out, till the mists hid him from human view.

The wailing song of Owny Hea rose through the wet air above the keening of the women in the bawn. But louder still was the voice of the lad who wore his father's ring, and drew now from beneath his mantle his father's sword.

'I am Donogh son of Murtogh *Mordha!*' he shouted, 'and I am Lord in Dun ogher, and when I am of my full strength I will kill the King of Spain, and give his castles and all his lands and herds and women to you for your own!'

The three towers of Dunlogher are broken, and the witch has fled from its grey lake,

and no man knows where the bones of its forgotten sept are buried. But the evil currents will never tire of writhing, and the shadows which are no shadows are forever changing, in the Path of Murty the Proud.

THE ROLL-CALL OF THE REEF

BY Q

THE ROLL-CALL OF THE REEF.

'YES, sir,' said my host the quarryman, reaching down the relics from their hook in the wall over the chimney-piece; 'they've hung here all my time, and most of my father's. The women won't touch 'em; they're afraid of the story. So here they'll dangle, and gather dust and smoke, till another tenant comes and tosses 'em out o' doors for rubbish. Whew! 't is coarse weather.'

He went to the door, opened it, and stood studying the gale that beat upon his cottage-front, straight from the Manacle Reef. The rain drove past him into the kitchen, aslant like threads of gold silk in the shine of the wreck-wood fire. Meanwhile, by the same firelight, I examined the relics on my knee.

The metal of each was tarnished out of knowledge. But the trumpet was evidently an old cavalry trumpet, and the threads of its parti-coloured sling, though frayed and dusty, still hung together. Around the side-drum, beneath its cracked brown varnish, I could hardly trace a royal coat-of-arms and a legend running — *Per Mare Per Terram* — the motto of the Marines. Its parchment, though coloured and scented with wood-smoke, was limp and mildewed; and I began to tighten up the straps — under which the drumsticks had been loosely thrust — with the idle purpose of trying if some music might be got out of the old drum yet.

But as I turned it on my knee, I found the drum attached to the trumpet-sling by a curious barrel-shaped padlock, and paused to examine this. The body of the lock was composed of half-a-dozen brass rings, set accurately edge to edge; and, rubbing the brass with my thumb, I saw that each of the six had a series of letters engraved around it.

I knew the trick of it, I thought. Here was one of those word padlocks, once so common; only to be opened by getting the rings to spell a certain word, which the dealer confides to you.

My host shut and barred the door, and came back to the hearth.

'T was just such a wind — east by south — that brought in what you've got between your hands. Back in the year 'nine, it was; my father has told me the tale a score o' times. You're twisting round the rings, I see. But you'll never guess the word. Parson Kendall, he made the word, and locked down a couple o' ghosts in their graves with it; and when his time came, he went to his own grave and took the word with him.'

'Whose ghosts, Matthew?'

'You want the story, I see, sir. My father could tell it better than I can. He was a young man in the year 'nine, unmarried at the time, and living in this very

cottage, just as I be. That's how he came to get mixed up with the tale.'

He took a chair, lit a short pipe, and went on, with his eyes fixed on the dancing violet flames: —

'Yes, he'd ha' been about thirty years old in January, of the year 'nine. The storm got up in the night o' the twenty-first o' that month. My father was dressed and out, long before daylight; he never was one to 'bide in bed, let be that the gale by this time was pretty near lifting the thatch over his head. Besides which, he'd fenced a small 'taty-patch that winter, down by Lowland Point, and he wanted to see if it stood the night's work. He took the path across Gunner's Meadow — where they buried most of the bodies afterwards. The wind was right in his teeth at the time, and once on the way (he's told me this often) a great strip of ore-weed came flying through the darkness and fetched him a slap on the cheek like a cold hand. But he made shift pretty well

till he got to Lowland, and then had to drop upon hands and knees and crawl, digging his fingers every now and then into the shingle to hold on, for he declared to me that the stones, some of them as big as a man's head, kept rolling and driving past till it seemed the whole foreshore was moving westward under him. The fence was gone, of course; not a stick left to show where it stood; so that, when first he came to the place, he thought he must have missed his bearings. My father, sir, was a very religious man; and if he reckoned the end of the world was at hand — there in the great wind and night, among the moving stones — you may believe he was certain of it when he heard a gun fired, and, with the same, saw a flame shoot up out of the darkness to windward, making a sudden fierce light in all the place about. All he could find to think or say was, "The Second Coming — The Second Coming! The Bridegroom cometh, and the wicked He will toss like a ball into a large country!" and being

already upon his knees, he just bowed his head and 'bided, saying this over and over.

'But by 'm-by, between two squalls, he made bold to lift his head and look, and then by the light — a bluish colour 't was — he saw all the coast clear away to Manacle Point, and off the Manacles, in the thick of the weather, a sloop-of-war with top-gallants housed driving stern foremost towards the reef. It was she, of course, that was burning the flare. My father could see the white streak and the ports of her quite plain as she rose to it, a little outside the breakers, and he guessed easy enough that her captain had just managed to wear ship, and was trying to force her nose to the sea with the help of her small bower anchor and the scrap or two of canvas that had n't yet been blown out of her. But while he looked, she fell off, giving her broadside to it foot by foot, and drifting back on the breakers around Carn dû and the Varses. The rocks lie so thick thereabouts, that 't was a toss up which she struck first;

at any rate, my father could n't tell at the time, for just then the flare died down and went out.

'Well, sir, he turned then in the dark and started back for Coverack to cry the dismal tidings — though well knowing ship and crew to be past any hope; and as he turned, the wind lifted him and tossed him forward "like a ball," as he 'd been saying, and homeward along the foreshore. As you know, 't is ugly work, even by daylight, picking your way among the stones there, and my father was prettily knocked about at first in the dark. But by this 't was nearer seven than six o'clock, and the day spreading. By the time he reached North Corner, a man could see to read print; hows'ever, he looked neither out to sea nor towards Coverack, but headed straight for the first cottage — the same that stands above North Corner to-day. A man named Billy Ede lived there then, and when my father burst into the kitchen bawling, "Wreck! wreck!" he saw Billy

Ede's wife, Ann, standing there in her clogs, with a shawl thrown over her head, and her clothes wringing wet.

'"Save the chap!" says Billy Ede's wife, Ann. "What d''ee mean by crying stale fish at that rate?"

'"But 't is a wreck, I tell 'ee. I 've a-zeed 'n!"

'"Why, so 't is," says she, "and I 've a-zeed 'n, too; and so has everyone with an eye in his head."

'And with that she pointed straight over my father's shoulder, and he turned; and there, close under Dolor Point, at the end of Coverack town, he saw another wreck washing, and the point black with people like emmets, running to and fro in the morning light. While he stood staring at her, he heard a trumpet sounded on board, the notes coming in little jerks, like a bird rising against the wind; but faintly, of course, because of the distance and the gale blowing — though this had dropped a little.

'"She 's a transport," said Billy Ede's wife, Ann, "and full of horse soldiers, fine long men. When she struck they must ha' pitched the hosses over first to lighten the ship, for a score of dead hosses had washed in afore I left, half-an-hour back. An' three or four soldiers, too — fine long corpses in white breeches and jackets of blue and gold. I held the lantern to one. Such a straight young man."

'My father asked her about the trumpeting.

'"That 's the queerest bit of all. She was burnin' a light when me an' my man joined the crowd down there. All her masts had gone; whether they were carried away, or were cut away to ease her, I don't rightly know. Anyway, there she lay 'pon the rocks with her decks bare. Her keelson was broke under her and her bottom sagged and stove, and she had just settled down like a sitting hen — just the leastest list to starboard; but a man could stand there easy. They had

rigged up ropes across her, from bulwark to bulwark, an' beside these the men were mustered, holding on like grim death whenever the sea made a clean breach over them, an' standing up like heroes as soon as it passed. The captain an' the officers were clinging to the rail of the quarter-deck, all in their golden uniforms, waiting for the end as if 't was King George they expected. There was no way to help, for she lay right beyond cast of line, though our folk tried it fifty times. And beside them clung a trumpeter, a whacking big man, an' between the heavy seas he would lift his trumpet with one hand, and blow a call; and every time he blew, the men gave a cheer. There (she says) — hark 'ee now — there he goes agen! But you won't hear no cheering any more, for few are left to cheer, and their voices weak. Bitter cold the wind is, and I reckon it numbs their grip o' the ropes; for they were dropping off fast with every sea when my man sent me home to get his breakfast. Another wreck,

you say? Well, there 's no hope for the tender dears, if 't is the Manacles. You 'd better run down and help yonder; though 't is little help any man can give. Not one came in alive while I was there. The tide 's flowing, an' she won't hold together another hour, they say."

'Well, sure enough, the end was coming fast when my father got down to the point. Six men had been cast up alive, or just breathing — a seaman and five troopers. The seaman was the only one that had breath to speak; and while they were carrying him into the town, the word went round that the ship's name was the *Despatch*, transport, homeward bound from Corunna, with a detachment of the 7th Hussars, that had been fighting out there with Sir John Moore. The seas had rolled her further over by this time, and given her decks a pretty sharp slope; but a dozen men still held on, seven by the ropes near the ship's waist, a couple near the break of the poop, and three on the

quarter-deck. Of these three my father made out one to be the skipper; close by him clung an officer in full regimentals — his name, they heard after, was Captain Duncanfield; and last came the tall trumpeter; and if you 'll believe me, the fellow was making shift there, at the very last, to blow "God save the King." What 's more, he got to "Send us victorious," before an extra big sea came bursting across and washed them off the deck — every man but one of the pair beneath the poop — and *he* dropped his hold before the next wave; being stunned, I reckon. The others went out of sight at once; but the trumpeter — being, as I said, a powerful man as well as a tough swimmer — rose like a duck, rode out a couple of breakers, and came in on the crest of the third. The folks looked to see him broke like an egg at their very feet; but when the smother cleared, there he was, lying face downward on a ledge below them; and one of the men that happened to have a rope round him — I forget

the fellow's name, if I ever heard it — jumped down and grabbed him by the ankle as he began to slip back. Before the next big sea, the pair were hauled high enough to be out of harm, and another heave brought them up to grass. Quick work, but master trumpeter was n't quite dead; nothing worse than a cracked head and three staved ribs. In twenty minutes or so they had him in bed, with the doctor to tend him.

'Now was the time — nothing being left alive upon the transport — for my father to tell of the sloop he 'd seen driving upon the Manacles. And when he got a hearing, though the most were set upon salvage, and believed a wreck in the hand, so to say, to be worth half-a-dozen they could n't see, a good few volunteered to start off with him and have a look. They crossed Lowland Point; no ship to be seen on the Manacles, nor anywhere upon the sea. One or two was for calling my father a liar. "Wait till we come

to Dean Point," said he. Sure enough on the far side of Dean Point they found the sloop's mainmast washing about with half-a-dozen men lashed to it, men in red jackets, every mother's son drowned and staring; and a little further on, just under the Dean, three or four bodies cast up on the shore, one of them a small drummer-boy, side-drum and all; and, near by, part of a ship's gig, with H. M. S. *Primrose* cut on the stern-board. From this point on, the shore was littered thick with wreckage and dead bodies, — the most of them Marines in uniform; and in Godrevy Cove, in particular, a heap of furniture from the captain's cabin, and amongst it a water-tight box, not much damaged, and full of papers, by which, when it came to be examined, next day, the wreck was easily made out to be the *Primrose*, of eighteen guns, outward bound from Portsmouth, with a fleet of transports for the Spanish War, thirty sail, I 've heard, but I 've never heard what became of them. Being

handled by merchant skippers, no doubt they rode out the gale, and reached the Tagus safe and sound. Not but what the Captain of the *Primrose* (Mein was his name) did quite right to try and club-haul his vessel when he found himself under the land; only he never ought to have got there, if he took proper soundings. But it 's easy talking.

'The *Primrose*, sir, was a handsome vessel — for her size, one of the handsomest in the King's service — and newly fitted out at Plymouth Dock. So the boys had brave pickings from her in the way of brass-work, ship's instruments, and the like, let alone some barrels of stores not much spoiled. They loaded themselves with as much as they could carry, and started for home, meaning to make a second journey before the preventive men got wind of their doings, and came to spoil the fun. But as my father was passing back under the Dean, he happened to take a look over his shoulder at the bodies there. "Hullo!" says he, and

dropped his gear, "I do believe there 's a leg moving!" and running fore, he stooped over the small drummer-boy that I told you about. The poor little chap was lying there, with his face a mass of bruises, and his eyes closed — but he had shifted one leg an inch or two, and was still breathing. So my father pulled out a knife, and cut him free from his drum — that was lashed on to him with a double turn of Manilla rope — and took him up and carried him along here, to this very room that we 're sitting in. He lost a good deal by this; for when he went back to fetch the bundle he 'd dropped, the preventive men had got hold of it, and were thick as thieves along the foreshore; so that 't was only by paying one or two to look the other way that he picked up anything worth carrying off — which you 'll allow to be hard, seeing that he was the first man to give news of the wreck.

'Well, the inquiry was held, of course, and my father gave evidence, and for the rest

they had to trust to the sloop's papers, for not a soul was saved besides the drummer-boy, and he was raving in a fever, brought on by the cold and the fright. And the seaman and the five troopers gave evidence about the loss of the *Despatch*. The tall trumpeter, too, whose ribs were healing, came forward and kissed the Book; but somehow his head had been hurt in coming ashore, and he talked foolish-like, and 't was easy seen he would never be a proper man again. The others were taken up to Plymouth, and so went their ways; but the trumpeter stayed on in Coverack; and King George, finding he was fit for nothing, sent him down a trifle of a pension after a while — enough to keep him in board and lodging, with a bit of tobacco over.

'Now the first time that this man — William Tallifer he called himself — met with the drummer-boy was about a fortnight after the little chap had bettered enough to

be allowed a short walk out of doors, which he took, if you please, in full regimentals. There never was a soldier so proud of his dress. His own suit had shrunk a brave bit with the salt water; but into ordinary frock an' corduroys he declared he would not get, not if he had to go naked the rest of his life; so my father — being a good-natured man, and handy with the needle — turned to and repaired damages with a piece or two of scarlet cloth cut from the jacket of one of the drowned Marines. Well, the poor little chap chanced to be standing, in this rig out, down by the gate of Gunner's Meadow, where they had buried two score and over of his comrades. The morning was a fine one, early in March month; and along came the cracked trumpeter, likewise taking a stroll.

'"Hullo!" says he; "good mornin'! And what might you be doin' here?"

'"I was a-wishin'," says the boy, "I had a pair o' drum-sticks. Our lads were buried

yonder without so much as a drum tapped or a musket fired; and that's not Christian burial for British soldiers."

'"Phut!" says the trumpeter, and spat on the ground; "a parcel of Marines!"

'The boy eyed him a second or so, and answered up: "If I'd a tab of turf handy, I'd hang it at your mouth, you greasy cavalryman, and learn you to speak respectful of your betters. The Marines are the handiest body o' men in the service."

'The trumpeter looked down on him from the height of six foot two, and asked: "Did they die well?"

'"They died very well. There was a lot of running to and fro at first, and some of the men began to cry, and a few to strip off their clothes. But when the ship fell off for the last time, Captain Mein turned and said something to Major Griffiths, the commanding officer on board, and the Major called out to me to beat to quarters. It might have been for a wedding, he sang it

out so cheerful. We'd had word already that 't was to be parade order; and the men fell in as trim and decent as if they were going to church. One or two even tried to shave at the last moment. The Major wore his medals. One of the seamen, seeing I had work to keep the drum steady — the sling being a bit loose for me, and the wind what you remember — lashed it tight with a piece of rope; and that saved my life afterwards, a drum being as good as a cork until it 's stove. I kept beating away until every man was on deck; and then the Major formed them up and told them to die like British soldiers, and the chaplain read a prayer or two — the boys standin' all the while like rocks, each man's courage keeping up the others'. The chaplain was in the middle of a prayer when she struck. In ten minutes she was gone. That was how they died, cavalryman."

'"And that was very well done, drummer of the Marines. What 's your name?"

'"John Christian."

'"Mine's William George Tallifer, trumpeter of the 7th Light Dragoons, the Queen's Own. I played 'God save the King' while our men were drowning. Captain Duncanfield told me to sound a call or two, to put them in heart; but that matter of 'God save the King' was a notion of my own. I won't say anything to hurt the feelings of a Marine, even if he's not much over five foot tall; but the Queen's Own Hussars is a tearin' fine regiment. As between horse and foot, 't is a question o' which gets the chance. All the way from Sahagun to Corunna 't was we that took and gave the knocks — at Mayorga and Rueda and Bennyventy." (The reason, sir, I can speak the names so pat, is that my father learnt 'em by heart afterwards from the trumpeter, who was always talking about Mayorga and Rueda and Bennyventy.) "We made the rear-guard, under General Paget, and drove the French every time;

and all the infantry did was to sit about in wine-shops till we whipped 'em out, an' steal an' straggle an' play the tomfool in general. And when it came to a stand-up fight at Corunna, 't was the horse, or the best part of it, that had to stay sea-sick aboard the transports, an' watch the infantry in the thick o' the caper. Very well they behaved, too; 'specially the 4th Regiment, an' the 42nd Highlanders, an' the Dirty Half-Hundred. Oh, ay; they 're decent regiments, all three. But the Queen's Own Hussars is a tearin' fine regiment. So you played on your drum when the ship was goin' down? Drummer John Christian, I 'll have to get you a new pair o' drum-sticks for that."

'Well, sir, it appears that the very next day the trumpeter marched into Helston, and got a carpenter there to turn him a pair of box-wood drumsticks for the boy. And this was the beginning of one of the most curious friendships you ever heard tell of. Nothing delighted the pair more than to

borrow a boat off my father and pull out to the rocks where the *Primrose* and the *Despatch* had struck and sunk; and on still days 't was pretty to hear them out there off the Manacles, the drummer playing his tattoo — for they always took their music with them — and the trumpeter practising calls, and making his trumpet speak like an angel. But if the weather turned roughish, they 'd be walking together and talking; leastwise, the youngster listened while the other discoursed about Sir John's campaign in Spain and Portugal, telling how each little skirmish befell; and of Sir John himself, and General Baird, and General Paget, and Colonel Vivian, his own commanding officer, and what kind of men they were; and of the last bloody stand-up at Corunna, and so forth, as if neither could have enough.

'But all this had to come to an end in the late summer, for the boy, John Christian, being now well and strong again, must go up to Plymouth to report himself. 'T was his

own wish (for I believe King George had forgotten all about him), but his friend would n't hold him back. As for the trumpeter, my father had made an arrangement to take him on as lodger as soon as the boy left; and on the morning fixed for the start, he was up at the door here by five o'clock, with his trumpet slung by his side, and all the rest of his belongings in a small valise. A Monday morning it was, and after breakfast he had fixed to walk with the boy some way on the road towards Helston, where the coach started. My father left them at breakfast together, and went out to meat the pig, and do a few odd morning jobs of that sort. When he came back, the boy was still at table, and the trumpeter standing here by the chimney-place with the drum and trumpet in his hands, hitched together just as they be at this moment.

'"Look at this," he says to my father, showing him the lock, "I picked it up off a starving brass-worker in Lisbon, and it is not

one of your commón locks that one word of six letters will open at any time. There 's *janius* in this lock; for you 've only to make the rings spell any six-letter word you please and snap down the lock upon that, and never a soul can open it — not the maker, even — until somebody comes along that knows the word you snapped it on. Now, Johnny here 's goin', and he leaves his drum behind him; for though he can make pretty music on it, the parchment sags in wet weather, by reason of the sea-water getting at it; an' if he carries it to Plymouth, they 'll only condemn it and give him another. And, as for me, I sha' n't have the heart to put lip to the trumpet any more when Johnny 's gone. So we 've chosen a word together, and locked 'em together upon that; and, by your leave, I 'll hang 'em here together on the hook over your fireplace. Maybe Johnny 'll come back; maybe not. Maybe, if he comes, I 'll be dead an' gone, an' he 'll take 'em apart an' try their music for old sake's sake. But if he never

comes, nobody can separate 'em; for nobody beside knows the word. And if you marry and have sons, you can tell 'em that here are tied together the souls of Johnny Christian, drummer of the Marines, and William George Tallifer, once trumpeter of the Queen's Own Hussars. Amen."

'With that he hung the two instruments 'pon the hook there; and the boy stood up and thanked my father and shook hands; and the pair went forth of the door, towards Helston.

'Somewhere on the road they took leave of one another; but nobody saw the parting, nor heard what was said between them. About three in the afternoon the trumpeter came walking back over the hill; and by the time my father came home from the fishing the cottage was tidied up, and the tea ready, and the whole place shining like a new pin. From that time for five years he lodged here with my father, looking after the house and tilling the garden. And all the while he was

steadily failing; the hurt in his head spreading, in a manner, to his limbs. My father watched the feebleness growing on him, but said nothing. And from first to last neither spake a word about the drummer, John Christian; nor did any letter reach them, nor word of his doings.

'The rest of the tale you 'm free to believe sir, or not, as you please. It stands upon my father's words, and he always declared he was ready to kiss the Book upon it, before judge and jury. He said, too, that he never had the wit to make up such a yarn; and he defied anyone to explain about the lock, in particular, by any other tale. But you shall judge for yourself.

'My father said that about three o'clock in the morning, April fourteenth, of the year 'fourteen, he and William Tallifer were sitting here, just as you and I, sir, are sitting now. My father had put on his clothes a few minutes before, and was mending his spiller by the light of the horn lantern, meaning to

set off before daylight to haul the trammel. The trumpeter had n't been to bed at all. Towards the last he mostly spent his nights (and his days, too) dozing in the elbow-chair where you sit at this minute. He was dozing then (my father said) with his chin dropped forward on his chest, when a knock sounded upon the door, and the door opened, and in walked an upright young man in scarlet regimentals.

'He had grown a brave bit, and his face was the colour of wood-ashes; but it was the drummer John Christian. Only his uniform was different from the one he used to wear, and the figures "38" shone in brass upon his collar.

'The drummer walked past my father as if he never saw him, and stood by the elbow-chair and said: —

'"Trumpeter, trumpeter, are you one with me?"

'And the trumpeter just lifted the lids of his eyes, and answered, "How should I

not be one with you, drummer Johnny — Johnny boy? If you come, I count: while you march, I mark time: until the discharge comes."

'"The discharge has come to-night," said the drummer; "and the word is Corunna no longer." And stepping to the chimney-place, he unhooked the drum and trumpet, and began to twist the brass rings of the lock, spelling the word aloud, so, — C-O-R-U-N-A. When he had fixed the last letter, the padlock opened in his hand.

'"Did you know, trumpeter, that, when I came to Plymouth, they put me into a line regiment?"

'"The 38th is a good regiment," answered the old Hussar, still in his dull voice; "I went back with them from Sahagun to Corunna. At Corunna they stood in General Fraser's division, on the right. They behaved well."

'"But I'd fain see the Marinys again," says the drummer, handing him the trumpet;

"and you, you shall call once more for the Queen's Own. Matthew," he says, suddenly, turning on my father — and when he turned, my father saw for the first time that his scarlet jacket had a round hole by the breast-bone, and that the blood was welling there — "Matthew, we shall want your boat."

'Then my father rose on his legs like a man in a dream, while they two slung on, the one his drum, and t'other his trumpet. He took the lantern and went quaking before them down to the shore, and they breathed heavily behind him; and they stepped into his boat, and my father pushed off.

'"Row you first for Dolor Point," says the drummer. So my father rowed them out past the white houses of Coverack to Dolor Point, and there, at a word, lay on his oars. And the trumpeter, William Tallifer, put his trumpet to his mouth and sounded the *Revelly*. The music of it was like rivers running.

'"They will follow," said the drummer. "Matthew, pull you now for the Manacles."

'So my father pulled for the Manacles, and came to an easy close outside Carn dû. And the drummer took his sticks and beat a tattoo, there by the edge of the reef: and the music of it was like a rolling chariot.

'"That will do," says he, breaking off; "they will follow. Pull now for the shore under Gunner's Meadow."

'Then my father pulled for the shore, and ran his boat in under Gunner's Meadow. And they stepped out, all three, and walked up to the meadow. By the gate the drummer halted, and began his tattoo again, looking out towards the darkness over the sea.

'And while the drum beat, and my father held his breath, there came up out of the sea and the darkness a troop of many men, horse and foot, and formed up among the graves; and others rose out of the graves and formed up, — drowned Marines with bleached faces, and pale Hussars, riding

their horses, all lean and shadowy. There was no clatter of hoofs or accoutrements, my father said, but a soft sound all the while like the beating of a bird's wing; and a black shadow lying like a pool about the feet of all. The drummer stood upon a little knoll just inside the gate, and beside him the tall trumpeter, with hand on hip, watching them gather; and behind them both my father, clinging to the gate. When no more came, the drummer stopped playing, and said, "Call the roll."

'Then the trumpeter stepped towards the end man of the rank and called, "Troop-Sergeant-Major Thomas Irons!" and the man answered in a thin voice, "Here!"

'"Troop-Sergeant-Major Thomas Irons, how is it with you?"

'The man answered, "How should it be with me? When I was young, I betrayed a girl; and when I was grown, I betrayed a friend, and for these things I must pay. But I died as a man ought. God save the King!"

'The trumpeter called to the next man, "Trooper Henry Buckingham!" and the next man answered, "Here!"

'"Trooper Henry Buckingham, how is it with you?"

'"How should it be with me? I was a drunkard, and I stole, and in Lugo, in a wine-shop, I killed a man. But I died as a man should. God save the King!"

'So the trumpeter went down the line; and when he had finished, the drummer took it up, hailing the dead Marines in their order. Each man answered to his name, and each man ended with "God save the King!" When all were hailed, the drummer stepped back to his mound, and called,—

'"It is well. You are content, and we are content to join you. Wait, now, a little while."

'With this he turned and ordered my father to pick up the lantern, and lead the way back. As my father picked it up, he heard the ranks of dead men cheer and call,

"God save the King!" all together, and saw them waver and fade back into the dark, like a breath fading off a pane.

'But when they came back here to the kitchen, and my father set the lantern down, it seemed they'd both forgot about him. For the drummer turned in the lantern light — and my father could see the blood still welling out of the hole in his breast — and took the trumpet-sling from around the other's neck, and locked drum and trumpet together again, choosing the letters on the lock very carefully. While he did this he said: —

'"The word is no more Corunna, but Bayonne. As you left out an 'n' in Corunna, so must I leave out an 'n' in Bayonne." And before snapping the padlock, he spelt out the word slowly — "B-A-Y-O-N-E." After that, he used no more speech, but turned and hung the two instruments back on the hook; and then took the trumpeter by the arm; and the pair walked out into

the darkness, glancing neither to right nor left.

'My father was on the point of following, when he heard a sort of sigh behind him; and there, sitting in the elbow-chair, was the very trumpeter he had just seen walk out by the door! If my father's heart jumped before, you may believe it jumped quicker now. But, after a bit, he went up to the man asleep in the chair and put a hand upon him. It was the trumpeter in flesh and blood that he touched; but though the flesh was warm, the trumpeter was dead.

'Well, sir, they buried him three days after; and at first my father was minded to say nothing about his dream (as he thought it). But the day after the funeral, he met Parson Kendall coming from Helston market; and the parson called out: "Have 'ee heard the news the coach brought down this mornin'?" "What news?" says my father. "Why, that peace is agreed upon." "None

too soon," says my father. "Not soon enough for our poor lads at Bayonne," the parson answered. "Bayonne!" cries my father, with a jump. "Why, yes;" and the parson told him all about a great sally the French had made on the night of April 13th. "Do you happen to know if the 38th Regiment was engaged?" my father asked. "Come, now," said Parson Kendall, "I did n't know you was so well up in the campaign. But as it happens, I *do* know that the 38th was engaged, for 't was they that held a cottage and stopped the French advance."

'Still my father held his tongue; and when, a week later, he walked into Helston and bought a "Mercury" off the Sherborne rider, and got the landlord of the "Angel" to spell out the list of killed and wounded, sure enough, there among the killed was Drummer John Christian, of the 38th Foot.

'After this, there was nothing for a religious man but to make a clean breast.

So my father went up to Parson Kendall, and told the whole story. The parson listened, and put a question or two, and then asked, —

'"Have you tried to open the lock since that night?"

'"I han't dared to touch it," says my father.

'"Then come along and try." When the parson came to the cottage here, he took the things off the hook and tried the lock. "Did he say '*Bayonne*'? The word has seven letters."

'"Not if you spell it with one 'n' as *he* did," says my father.

'The parson spelt it out — B-A-Y-O-N-E. "Whew!" says he, for the lock had fallen open in his hand.

'He stood considering it a moment, and then he says, "I tell you what. I should n't blab this all round the parish, if I was you. You won't get no credit for truth-telling, and a miracle 's wasted on a set of fools. But if

you like, I 'll shut down the lock again upon a holy word that no one but me shall know, and neither drummer nor trumpeter, dead nor alive, shall frighten the secret out of me."

'"I wish to gracious you would, parson," said my father.

'The parson chose the holy word there and then, and shut the lock back upon it, and hung the drum and trumpet back in their place. He is gone long since, taking the word with him. And till the lock is broken by force, nobody will ever separate those twain.'

'THAT THERE MASON'

BY

W. CLARK RUSSELL

'THAT THERE MASON'

I WAS in Ramsgate, in the pier-yard, and noticed the figure of a boatman leaning against the wall of a building used by the Trinity people. I stepped close, and looked at him. He was a little man, curved; his hands were buried to the knuckles' end in his breeches pockets; he wore a yellow sou'wester, and under it was a sour, sneering, wicked face. His eyes were damp and sunk, and seemed to discharge a thin liquor like pale ale, and he would not pull out his hands to wipe them.

'What's your name?' said I.

He looked at me slowly, beginning at my waistcoat, and answered: 'What's that got to do with you?'

'Do you want a job?'

'What sorter job?' he replied, continuing to lean against the wall, without any motion of his body, merely looking at me.

'The job of answering a civil question with a civil answer,' said I.

He turned his head, and gazed at the sea without replying.

"'What's that obelisk?' said I.

His head came back to its bearings, and he answered: 'What's what?'

'That thing in granite, yonder; that tall stone spike. What is it?'

'Can yer read?'

'Better than you, I expect,' I answered.

'Then why don't you go and find out for yourself?' said he, uttering a small, hideous laugh.

'I rather fancy,' said I, 'that that spike was erected to commemorate the landing of George IV. He was kind enough to condescend to land at Ramsgate. Wasn't that good of him, Tommy? Blown here, maybe, vomiting, to the pier-head, and rejoicing,

under his waistcoats, to get ashore anywhere and anyhow. And the snobs of Ramsgate go to the expense of erecting that unwholesome and shocking memorial of so abject a trifle as the landing of a fat immoral man at this port on his way to London. Why don't you, and the like of you, level it, — knock the blamed thing into blocks of stone, and build a house with them for a good man to live in?'

His eyes had come to the surface; they were running harder than ever. He was in a rage.

'Look here,' said he; 'I don't know who y'are, but don't yer like that there pillar?'

'No,' I answered.

'Then why don't yer go home? There's nothen' to keep yer 'ere, I 'ope? Plenty of trains to all parts, and I 'll carry yer bag for nothen', allowin' you 've got one, only for the satisfaction of seein' the last of yer.'

I told him I would remember that, and, bursting into uncontrollable laughter at his peculiarly ugly, wicked face, I walked off, scarce knowing but that I should feel the blow of ''arf a brick' in the back of my head as I went.

I met a boatman with whom I had gone fishing on some occasions.

'Thomas,' said I, pointing to the leaning figure, 'who is that queer little chap?'

'Jimmie Mason,' replied Thomas, with a half-glance at the wall-scab, then turning his back upon it.

'Has he ever been hung?' said I.

'Don't think he could have been quite old enough for it,' he replied, turning again to look at the little man. 'They cut a man down from the gibbet on the sand hills yonder,' said he, pointing in the direction of Deal, 'when my father was a boy, and he used to say that, when the man got sprung, he 'd relate, in beautiful language, how he felt when he was turned off.'

'A dose of turning-off would do that gent in the sou'wester a great deal of good,' said I. 'He 's a sort of man, you know, to murder you when you 're out fishing with him. He 's a sort of man to stab you in the back with a great clasp knife, and drag your body into the empty house, which never lets ever after.'

'Old Jim Mason 's just the worst-tempered man on the coast. His heart was turned black by a disappointment,' said Thomas.

'Love?' said I.

'Why, not exactly love,' he replied; 'it was more in the hovelling line.'

'Is it a good yarn?' I asked. 'If so, I 'll stand two drinks; a pint for you and a half-pint for me.'

'It might be worth recording,' said Thomas, taking the time occupied by the harbour clock in striking twelve to reflect. 'Anyways, pint or no pint, here it is,' and, folding his arms, this intelligent 'longshore-man' started thus: —

'Some years ago, a gemman and a lady went out for a sail, and, as is not always customary in these 'ere parts, — though we 've got some thick heads among us, I can tell you, — they were capsized. The gemman was drowned, the lady and the boatman saved, and the boat was picked up and towed in, — there she lies, " The 'Arbour Bud."

'The widder, as was natural, was in dreadful grief; and, in a day or two, police bills was pasted about the walls, offering a reward of 50*l.* to any one who should recover the body. That there Mason, as you see a-leaning agin that house, was just the party for a job of this sort. He called 'em soft jobs. He was one of them men as would walk about the rocks and sands arter a breeze of wind, hunting for whatever he might find, — be it a corpse that had come ashore to keep him in good spirits, or the 'arf of a shoe. Him and Sam Bowler was a-huntin' arter jewellery down among the rocks one day, and that there Mason picked up a gold ring.

He offered it to Bowler, who gave him five shullens for it, and that night, at the sign of the "Welcome 'Arp," that there Mason swallowed some of his front teeth, and got both eyes plugged, for Bowler, who weighs fourteen stun, had discovered that the ring was brass.

'Well, that there Mason takes it into his head to go for a walk one day arter the bills about the body had been pasted on the walls. He walked in the direction of Broadstairs, and, comin' to the coastguard station, he falls in with one of the men, a sort of relation of his. They got yarning. The coastguard had a big telescope under his arm. That there Mason asked leave to have a look, and he levels the glass and begins to work about with it. The line of the Good'in Sands was as plain as the nose on his face. It was low water, the whole stretch of the shoal was visible, and it was a clear bright afternoon.

'"What 's taken yer heye?" says the coastguard presently.

'"Nothen, oh, nothen," answered that there Mason. "Sands show oncommon plain to-day."

'He handed back the glass to the coast-guard, and then, instead of continuing his walk, he returned to this here yard, and got into his boat and pulled away out of the harbour.

'Now what do yer think he had seen in that telescope? A dead man stranded on the Good'in Sands. There could be no mistake. That there Mason belonged to the cocksure lot; *he* never made a blunder in all his life. It might n't be the body as was advertised for, but, if it was, 't was a fifty-pound job; and that there Mason, without a word, pulled out o' 'arbour feelin', I daresay, as if he 'd got the gold in his pocket, and the heavens was beginnin' to smile upon him.

''T is a long pull to the Good'ins, tide or no tide. None took any notice of his goin' out. There was some boats a-fishin' in

Pegwell Bay, and if any man looked at that there Mason a-rowing out to sea, he 'd expect to see him bring up and drop a line over the side. He rowed and rowed. The body lay upon the edge of the Sand, a long distance away from the Gull lightship. He rowed and rowed. By-and-bye, standin' up, he pulls out a bit of a pocket glass, and then discovers that what he 'd taken to be a man's dead body was nothen but a small balk of timber, black with black seaweed, stretched out on either side, so that at a distance it looked exactly like a corpse on its back with its arms out.

'That there Mason might ha' burst himself with passion if he had n't been too dead beat with rowing. Even in them times he was n't no chicken. Well, thinks he to himself, since I 've had all this here labour merely to view a balk of timber, I may as well step ashore for a spell of rest, and take a short cruise round, for who knows what I might find? So what does the joker do but

head his boat right in for the sand, and then he jumps ashore. He made his boat fast to the balk of timber. It was arter five, and the sun westerin' fast. He drives his 'ands deep into his pockets, and slowly meanders, always a-looking. What was there to find? *He* could n't tell. There was expectation, yer see, and that was a sort of joy to the 'eart of that there Mason. Y'u 'd hardly think it of a boatman, but it 's true: whilst that bally idiot was a-wandering about them sands searching for whatever there might be, his boat, giving a tug at her painter, frees the rope and drifts away on the tide, with that there man as you are now a-looking at walking about the sands, his 'ands buried deep and his eyes fixed, dreaming of lighting upon a sovereign or a gold chain, — you can never tell what passes in such an 'ead. By'm-bye he turns to look for his boat, and lo and be'old she 's gone. There she was half a mile off, quietly floating away to the norr'ard. The sun was beginning to sink

low; the night was coming along. The people aboard the Gull lightship did n't see him or take any notice; what was that there Mason going to do? There was no wreck to shelter him. It might be that at Ramsgate they 'd see a lonely man a-walking about, and send a boat; but, as I 've said, dusk was at 'and, and he knew bloomin' well that if they did n't see him soon they 'd never see him again.

'He 'd taken notice afore the darkness had drawn down of a cutter bearing about northeast. He watched her now whilst it was light, for it looked to him as if she was making a straight course for the sands. It was plain she was n't under no government. The wind blew her along, and at eight o'clock that evening, when the moon was rising and the tide making fast all about the sands, I 'm blest if that cutter did n't come quietly ashore, and lie as sweetly still as if she was a young woman wore out with walkin'.

'I allow that it did n't take that there Mason a lifetime to scramble aboard of her. She was a fine boat, 'bout sixteen or eighteen ton, newly sheathed, and her sails shone white and new in the moon. When he got aboard he sung out, "Anybody here?" and he received no reply. There was a bit of a forehatch; he put his 'ead into it and sung out, and several times he sung out, and got no answer; he then walked aft. I must tell you, it was a very quiet night, with a light breeze and plenty of stars, and a growing moon. He looks through the bit of a skylight, and sees nothen; puts his head in the companion-way and sings out as afore. An abandoned wessel, he thinks to himself, and his 'eart, you may be sure, turns to and rejoices.

'What should he do? Try to kedge her off himself? That was beyond him. Send up a rocket, if he should find such a thing in the vessel? S'elp me, he was that greedy he could n't make up his mind to ask for 'elp.

He took a look round the sea and considered. There was some big lump of shadow out behind the sands,—she looked like a French smack; his boat was out of sight in the dark, but the cutter, he noticed, carried a little jolly boat, amidships, right fair in the wake of the gangway, easy to be launched, smack fashion, so that there Mason felt his life was saved.

'He carried some lucifers in his pocket for lighting his pipe; he stepped into the cabin, and struck a light. A lamp was hung up close against his 'and; it was ready trimmed, and he set the wick afire, and looked round. What did he see? As beautiful a little cabin as the hinvention of man could figure. The sides of the wessel had been picked out by artists, and that there Mason swears no man ever saw finer pictures in his life,—ladies a-bathin', gentlemen chasin' with hounds, a steamer going along; both sides had been picked out into pictures, and that there Mason looked around him

with his mouth opening and opening. There was likewise lookin' glasses; a thick carpet; the lamps seemed to be made of silver, and there was such a twinkling of silver all about, what with the 'andles of doors and a lot of forks and spoons on the table, that Mason's eyes began to dance in his evil old nut, and he reckoned himself a made man for life. Look at him as he leans there.

'But what else did he see? The door of a cabin right aft stood open, and half-way in and half-way out lay the body of a man; his throat was most horribly cut; not by 's own 'and. No man could nearly cut his own 'ead half off as that chap's was. He 'd been murdered, and there was no man in that beautiful little cutter saving that bleedin' corpse. It was a sight to have thickened the wind-pipe of most men, and set them a-breathin' hard and tight; but *he* saw nothing but a man with his throat cut. He took a look at him, and reckoned him to be a furriner, as, indeed, the whole little ship seemed. It was a very

quiet night, and he stood looking at the dead body considering what he should do. If he brought assistance from the shore, and the cutter was towed into port, his share of the salvage money, — for the rewards are small in jobs of this sort when the weather is fine and there is no risk of life, — his share, I says, of the money would be scarcely worth talking about. Same time, if he left the cutter to lie, and it came on to blow, she 'd go to pieces afore the morning. That was n't his consarn, he thought; he had come to the Good'ins on the look-out for a job, and had got one, and he made up his mind to make the most of his chances.

'So the first thing that there Mason did was to stoop down and plunder the body. Plenty was on it. I can see in fancy the looks of his face as he 'elped himself; he found a beautiful gold watch and chain, a diamond ring, and another ring, a lot of gold coins in French money in one pocket, and French money in silver coin in another. He

found a silver toothpick, an eye-glass, and I can't tell you what besides. He was in high feather, a very 'appy man; he fills his pockets with the forks and spoons, supposing them silver, tho' they was n't. He looked into the cabin where the dead body lay, but found nothen but bed-clothes and male wearin' apparel hangin' to the bulkhead. There was a chest of drawers full of good linen shirts and vests and the like of that. But that there Mason thought of Cocky Honour, the Customs man, and abandoned the idea of makin' up them shirts into a parcel.

'It was his notion to get away in the cutter's jolly boat or dinghey, and he stood looking about him to see if there was anything else he could put in his pockets. All at once he heard a noise of men's voices alongside, and, immediately arter, the 'eavy tread of fishermen's boots over'ead. Afore he could get on deck, a big chap, with a red night-cap on, came down the little companion-ladder, and instantly roars out something in

French. Down comes others, — three or four. 'T was a minute or two afore they took notice of the dead body, all along of starin' round 'em, and at that there Mason, who stared back. They then set up a howl, and fell a-brandishing their arms, as if they were gone stark mad.

'"You killee him!' roars one.

'"No, no," sings out Mason, "me no killee, me find him killee."

'"You killee him," roars the great man with the cap, lookin' most ferocious, for that here Mason says his face was nearly all hair, besides that he squinted most damnably, beggin' of your pardon. And then he began to shout to the others, who shouted back at him, all talkin' at the top of their voices, as is the custom in France when excited, and all lookin' at that there Mason.

'Suddenly they all rushed at him, knocked him down, overhauled his pockets, and brought out the spoons and forks and the dead gent's gold watch and chain, and the rest of the plunder.

'"You killee!" roared the big man in the cap, and layin' hold of him, they ran him into the cabin where the corpse was, and locked him up with the body, and presently that there Mason, who was next door to ravin' mad, felt that they was warping the cutter off, — that, in short, she *was* off, and, by the noise of passin' waters, either sailing or in tow.

'And now to end this, sir, what do you think happened to that there Mason? She was a French smack that had sighted and boarded the cutter; that was a Frenchman likewise, and they towed her straight to Boulogne, at which place they arrived at about ten o'clock in the morning. Numbers was on the pier to see the uncommon sight of a smack towing an abandoned cutter. That there Mason was handed over to the authorities, charged with murder and robbery. The British Consul took up the case. When the facts were stated, and inquiries made, his innocence was established; but not afore

he 'd lain three weeks in a beastly jail, fed on black bread, and denied his pipe. I don't say he came home much changed; but I allow the disappointment sunk as deep as his heart, and blacked it. And to this hour he 's not fit company for man nor beast. Look at him as he leans!'

Laughing together, we strolled off for our drinks, and I saw Mason turn his head to watch us as we walked.

THE END.

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